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New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Sangqu	(South Africa)
<i>Members:</i>	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Yang Tao
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Haroon
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

The situation in Libya

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The meeting was called to order at 10:45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Libya

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Libya to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ian Martin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Navanethem Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Martin.

Mr. Martin: When I last briefed the Council a month ago (see S/PV.6698), I noted that the public mood in Libya was gradually changing as it increasingly demanded improved institutional performance that meets popular expectations, and accountability and transparency in public affairs; and that as the countdown towards elections began, civil society was becoming increasingly assertive in monitoring and critiquing the performance of the National Transitional Council (NTC) and the Government. Criticism of Libya's interim leadership has grown, and in recent days has been expressed in ways that go beyond a healthy democratic spirit, including some physical violence, and has led to the resignation of the Vice-Chairman of the NTC.

Meanwhile the challenge of reconciliation has been highlighted in the most serious way by the outbreak of fighting in Bani Walid. Last week, Chairman Abdul Jalil discussed with me the challenges the NTC has been encountering in its efforts to appoint new leadership of the local councils in Bani Walid and Sirte that would be broadly acceptable to the people of each city. In the case of Bani Walid, an NTC committee had held local discussions with all stakeholders in

efforts to find a solution. Following my Deputy's visit to the two cities on 3 and 4 January, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) issued a call for more attention, including focused reconciliation efforts to accelerate their full return to normalcy, and we have pursued this in our contacts with the authorities.

Regrettably, in the charged local atmosphere, a security-related incident triggered clashes between members of the local population and the revolutionary brigades stationed in the city, as a result of which several were reportedly killed. This has been misreported as pro-Al-Qadhafi forces taking back control of the city. The Government responded by dispatching units from the national army, and is currently engaging with all stakeholders to contain the situation and address the underlying security and political challenges in Bani Walid.

In very different ways, each of these developments indicates the problems associated with the transitional period while the interim authorities continue to lack the full legitimacy of elected bodies, at both the national and the local levels. The protests in Benghazi began as part of a movement to "correct the path of the revolution" and appear to have been triggered following widely publicized comments in early December, made as part of the debate regarding national reconciliation, about a possible amnesty being granted to former Al-Qadhafi fighters or members of his regime. The protests acquired momentum as they evolved into a platform critical of the NTC's performance. Demonstrators focused their demands on calls for greater transparency and accountability, as well as the needs of the war wounded. There have also been calls for supporters of the former regime to be barred from the political process and purged from all State institutions, and for the reappointment of local councils based on local elections. Public frustration regarding the perceived shortcomings in delivery by the Government is growing.

When full legitimacy can be established only by elections, some interim legitimacy must be accepted to determine the framework for the first elections, which is a key responsibility of the NTC. The interim Government was established only in late November, after months during which there was an almost complete vacuum of governance. Transparency, communication and consultation are indeed important elements of fostering confidence and trust in the interim authorities.

But the handicaps are not only on the part of Libya's leadership. Libya's new media are as yet very far from being a reliable channel to convey correct information to the public, and civil society is only beginning to organize itself into forms that facilitate consultation. The former regime may have been toppled, but the harsh reality is that the Libyan people continue to have to live with its deep-rooted legacy: weak, at times absent, State institutions, coupled with the long absence of political parties and civil society organizations, which render the country's transition more difficult. This is further complicated by what was a systematic distortion of the country's socio-political fabric.

Those of us who engage with the interim Government meet committed and capable ministers struggling to address major challenges with little support in a context of institutional inexperience and an over-large bureaucracy of uncertain competence and allegiance. But the public experiences only the delay in delivery of funds and services. The agreement of the Sanctions Committee to the request for the delisting of the Central Bank and the Foreign Bank has cleared the way to overcoming the crisis of liquidity, but this is barely beginning to be experienced by national and local institutions, let alone by the public at large.

The combination of a tight timeline, inexperience in drafting electoral legislation, shortcomings in communication and the lack of proper mechanisms for consultation have set limitations to the process of drafting the electoral law. The NTC and most stakeholders have remained determined that the commitment in the Constitutional Declaration to electing a national congress by late June must be respected. This has left little time for consultations on the legislative framework, which must embody some difficult and inevitably controversial political choices.

Within the limits of the time available, the NTC electoral committee made real efforts to engage the public, publishing the draft law and convening or participating in a number of public consultations. It also welcomed close engagement with the UNSMIL electoral team, adopting many of its technical recommendations, as well as responding to concerns expressed in the public consultations. As a result, we believe that both the main electoral law and the parallel electoral administration law, which establishes a 17-member high national electoral commission, gained in clarity and focus. UNSMIL had presented its

concerns in regards to the restrictions in the eligibility criteria for voters and candidates alike, and welcomes some progress in making these criteria more inclusive.

Criticism that public consultation has, however, been inadequate is sharpened by the fact that the proposed division of the country into constituencies and allocation of seats has not been published and remains under discussion by the NTC. Political groupings are concerned that the law makes no mention of the rights and responsibilities of political parties. Of particular concern to UNSMIL, and indeed to the Secretary-General, is the rejection by the full NTC of the proposal by the electoral committee that would have ensured the presence of at least 10 per cent of women in the National Congress – a proposal that some women's groups and civil society voices rejected as insufficient, while according to the electoral committee there did not appear to be general public support for any quota.

The NTC has adopted the electoral administration law and appointed the High National Electoral Commission, and had intended also to announce the main electoral law on 22 January. Amid the protests in Benghazi, however, the NTC decided to continue consultations and to consider further amendments until 29 January. UNSMIL's electoral experts remain engaged with the NTC team, and are opening discussions with the Chairman of the High National Electoral Commission regarding United Nations support during the operational stage ahead. We particularly hope that the extended period may allow for reconsideration of the case for special measures to promote the representation of women.

As I have highlighted in all my previous briefings to the Council, security remains a major concern. Events on the ground over the past month highlight the risks associated with both the continued abundance of weapons on the streets and the diverse armed brigades in the country with unclear lines of command and control. In the capital, clashes in early January between rival brigades from Misrata and Tripoli resulted in several fatalities and injuries; armed clashes later in the month between brigades in Gheryan and Al-Asabah, and earlier this week in Bani Walid, required high level intervention to put an end to the fighting. Although authorities have successfully contained these and other more minor incidents that continue to take place across the country on a regular basis, there is the ever-present

possibility that similar outbreaks of violence could escalate and widen in scope.

Those at the head of the interim Government regard it as their highest priority to assert the authority of the State and address the future of the members of the brigades. The success of any integration process will hinge on the ability of the authorities to conduct consultations with relevant stakeholders to forge a consensus on the way forward, including agreement on processes for the integration or reintegration of ex-combatants, while at the same time setting up workable mechanisms to deal effectively with security challenges, including those related to the upcoming election. As experience has shown elsewhere, this process cannot be treated as a purely technical exercise, but requires a political framework to ensure its viability.

Amid some initial confusion, an inter-ministerial committee has initiated a process for registering ex-combatants, the first phase of which will be carried out by local councils across the country. Information collected would then be centrally processed, to be followed by the referral of registrants to the Ministries of the Interior, Defence or Labour in accordance with their preferred option. UNSMIL and the United Nations Development Programme are in discussion with the relevant ministries and bodies about their needs for technical assistance.

As regards the police, the Ministry of the Interior faces the dual challenge of integrating ex-combatants at the same time as it strengthens and reforms the inherited police force, its training and administration. At the request of the Minister, UNSMIL is increasing its direct advisory support within the Ministry, as well as supporting its overall coordination of international assistance. Several Member States have come forward with offers of training and other assistance, and some have signed bilateral agreements to support the police force in a number of areas. UNSMIL's assistance includes supporting the Ministry in the development of a training strategy and curricula for a number of courses, including for election security.

Following the mandate given to UNSMIL in resolution 2022 (2011), I am now supported by a special adviser on the threats and challenges posed by arms and related materiel in Libya. Among his responsibilities is the continuing coordination of efforts around the identification and eventual control of man-

portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and other explosive remnants of war, ammunition storage management and mine action. UNSMIL has further strengthened its team by bringing in a MANPADS expert to support ongoing mapping efforts and an arms registration advisor.

The joint United Nations/African Union mission to several Sahel countries in December confirmed previous assessments that there is as yet little evidence that MANPADS have been smuggled out of Libya in significant numbers. This reinforces the need to focus on arms control measures within Libya. In this respect, UNSMIL has started co-hosting with the Ministry of Defence an operational sub-group on MANPADS, which coordinates the bilateral mapping and identification efforts currently under way. While so far 123 weapons holding sites have been visited and an estimated 5,000 MANPADS systems and components have been accounted for, access to many of the holdings of brigades remains a challenge.

A number of donors have come forward to lend their support for action against landmines and explosive remnants of war in the period since I last briefed the Council, and I express my thanks for this generous response. We now have 28 clearance teams and 30 risk education teams working throughout the country. New reports of mines and explosives contamination, however, are being recorded almost on a daily basis. The current capacity on the ground remains insufficient to meet the growing demand and, in the short term at least, greater external financial support remains necessary to tackle this issue effectively until Libyan funding becomes available.

There also has been further progress in the inspection and verification of chemical materials, particularly of those previously undeclared materials located after the end of the previous regime and identified by the new Libyan authorities in their declaration of 28 November. From 17 to 19 January, inspectors of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) visited the sites and verified the declared chemical weapons, which consist of sulphur mustard agents that were not loaded into munitions. Libya must now submit to the OPCW a plan and timeline for the destruction of the declared materials by the end of April. Several Member States have indicated their support in this effort. Regarding nuclear materials, the eventual sale and transfer of the

6,400 barrels of nuclear material stored in Sabha remain a key priority.

The concerns of Libya's neighbours regarding arms proliferation are mirrored in Libya's own concern that former Al-Qadhafi supporters may be regrouping and training in neighbouring countries in order to destabilize parts of Libya. This, together with an increase in illegal immigration and drug trafficking at its southern borders, has led border security and management to become a top priority of the interim Government. To this end, UNSMIL has now convened two coordination meetings with senior representatives of the Ministries of Defence, Interior, Finance and Foreign Affairs and relevant bilateral partners to identify Libya's priority needs in this area and to facilitate offers of assistance. UNSMIL is coordinating closely with the European Union, which is fielding its border management assessment team in February. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization of Migration are participating in a sub group on illegal immigration and supporting the Libyan authorities regarding the current influx of Syrian refugees via the Egyptian border.

On all of these issues, an intensified dialogue with Libya's neighbours on the threats emanating from a porous regime on both sides of Libya's borders is indispensable and has been promoted by the first visits of Libya's Minister of Foreign Affairs to Niger, Mali and Chad. Chairman Jean Ping told me during his recent visit to Tripoli of his positive discussions with the Government, and welcomed the intention of Prime Minister El-keib to head Libya's delegation to the African Union summit later this week.

The Council is about to hear from the High Commissioner for Human Rights, so I will limit my own remarks regarding human rights issues. I regret to report that there has been only limited progress regarding the situation of detainees since I last briefed the Council, with the justice system continuing to face significant challenges in its operations. To date, the Ministry of Justice has been able to manage six transfers of detention facilities from brigades to the Ministry, two since my last briefing. The process of transferring facilities is hindered by many factors, including insufficient numbers of judicial police who carry out core prison administration functions. UNSMIL continues to press the Government to expedite those handovers, so that a comprehensive

review of cases of detainees can be undertaken, culminating either in their release or in formal charges in accordance with legal standards. The large detainee caseload is taxing the Ministry's current level of capacity, with frustrations mounting, which culminated into a riot two weeks ago at one facility by inmates protesting their continued detention without due process.

The outbreaks of local conflicts highlight the pressing need to adopt and implement a national framework for transitional justice and reconciliation. Towards that end, the NTC has adopted a law on transitional justice, but has so far not made it public, pending the further development of the judicial and legal institutions necessary to implement its provisions. In that regard, UNSMIL, in partnership with the Ministry of Justice, as well as with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, organized a conference from 23 to 25 January to discuss advancing the transitional justice agenda with national Government counterparts and members of civil society. The conference was opened by the Prime Minister, who stressed the importance of transitional justice to Libya's progress.

With regard to Libya's efforts to locate and identify missing people, the Government has decided to incorporate that responsibility within the Ministry for the Assistance to the Families of Martyrs and Missing Persons, and to dissolve the commission that had been established last October. UNSMIL remains committed to supporting those efforts within whatever framework the Government decides, and has urged that the transfer to the Ministry should not prevent the process for the search for, and identification of, missing persons from remaining neutral and independent, and implemented in accordance with international standards. The Prime Minister and other Government officials have assured us that those principles will continue to guide the Government's actions.

A positive step towards advancing the protection of human rights in Libya has been the NTC's establishment in December of the National Council for Public Liberties and Human Rights. The 11-member Council, comprising human rights defenders including women and youth, is currently engaging in consultations with Government officials, civil society and the international community while they prepare

their start-up. UNSMIL will be providing technical assistance in response to their request.

My Deputy, as Humanitarian Coordinator, and the Libyan Humanitarian Relief Agency continue to discuss with representatives of the Tawergha community displaced in Benghazi and representatives of the local council ways to address ongoing humanitarian needs, as well as the possibilities of promoting a durable solution to this issue. Approximately one half of the remaining internally displaced persons in the country are Tawerghans who, as previously reported, remain unable to return to their hometown.

On 30 and 31 January, United Nations, European Union and World Bank representatives will participate with Libyan ministers, officials and civil society in a workshop aimed at aligning assistance from the international community with the Government's urgent priorities. The Government has decided that this should focus on seven Government priorities outside the security sector, namely, civil society and media, elections, public administration, public financial management, social service delivery, strategic communications and transitional justice. We expect that the workshop will determine whether the Government wishes to proceed with assessments of needs in those areas, and its future framework for coordination of international assistance.

Following the Government's identification of its priorities, and the ministries' efforts to identify their objectives and targets for a national transitional plan, the United Nations has been assisting the Deputy Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Planning regarding coordination within the Government and with respect to international assistance. That has included meetings between United Nations country team members and ministries to link agencies with their respective counterparts, so that United Nations recovery and development activities are in line with their priorities.

I am very pleased to inform members of the Council that, on 10 January, the status of mission agreement was signed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Mr. Ashur Saad Bin Khayyal, and myself. The signature of the agreement in such a short period of time since the establishment of the Mission in mid-September and the formation of the interim Government in late November

is a reflection of the excellent relationship already established. Meanwhile, we have consulted Libyan authorities regarding the role of UNSMIL beyond its current mandate, and are finalizing the integrated mission planning process, which will be reflected in the Secretary-General's recommendations in the report to be submitted to the Council by the end of February.

I think that it is not hard to understand the contexts of the difficulties facing Libya's interim authorities, which have been manifested in recent days. They do indeed require determined political management by transitional leaders, who must be given the space to address their internal priorities, rather than the longer-term interests of external actors. UNSMIL remains focused on supporting them in those key challenges, and that will be reflected in the proposals that I look forward to discussing with the Council on the basis of the Secretary-General's recommendations in March.

The President: I thank Mr. Martin for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Pillay.

Ms. Pillay: I thank the Council for the invitation to brief it on human rights developments in Libya. I welcome the ongoing attention given by the Council to this fragile country situation.

Through their courage and resilience, the Libyan people have emerged from 42 years of systematic human rights violations. In the weeks that followed the declaration of liberation, the challenge before them has been to create the conditions necessary for achieving long-term stability and security and to ensure respect for the rule of law and human rights. In that regard, the development and implementation of inclusive, transparent and victim-centred transitional justice policies is essential.

Importantly, the interim authorities have repeatedly expressed their commitment to human rights and have taken some encouraging steps. In November 2011, Interim Prime Minister Abdurrahim El-keib told the media that his Government would "build a nation that respects human rights and does not accept the abuse of human rights". He noted that they need time to put that into practice. As Mr. Martin said, in December the National Council for Public Liberties and Human Rights was established.

In addition, the authorities have begun undertaking the arduous task of legal reform and the adoption of new legislation. Of relevance in that regard is the adoption of a law on transitional justice, as yet to be made public, on which the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) provided extensive comments through our staff in the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). I commend the Libyan authorities for their sense of urgency in addressing pressing issues by means of strengthening the legal framework. Before new laws are enacted, care needs to be exercised to ensure their compliance with international human rights standards and to undertake wide consultation on their provisions with all relevant actors and stakeholders.

At the same time, the human rights situation remains of concern and requires increased vigilance by, and sustained assistance from, the international community. Undoubtedly, immense challenges lie ahead. The interim Government still does not exercise effective control over the revolutionary brigades, and that has human rights repercussions in a number of areas. Light and heavy weaponry in the hands of such brigades pose a threat to public security and the protection of the human rights of the population.

A related area that I am extremely concerned about is the conditions of detention and treatment of detainees held by various revolutionary brigades. The International Committee of the Red Cross visited more than 8,500 detainees, in approximately 60 places of detention, between March and December 2011. The majority of the detainees are accused of being Al-Qadhafi loyalists and include a large number of sub-Saharan African nationals. The lack of oversight by the central authorities creates an environment conducive to torture and ill-treatment. My staff have received alarming reports that that is happening in the places of detention that they have visited.

It is therefore urgent that all detention centres be brought under the control of the Ministry of Justice and the General Prosecutor's Office. Moreover, a structure and process for the judicial screening of detainees should be put in place immediately so that those detainees held without any legal basis can be released, while others receive a fair trial.

The interim Government has made some effort to address the existing legal vacuum. For example, on

29 November 2011, the Minister of the Interior issued a decision stipulating which authorities have jurisdiction to arrest, detain and investigate. In addition, in December, the Minister of Justice reported that the judicial police had assumed control over six detention facilities. However, detainees continue to be held in unacceptable circumstances outside any legal framework or the protection of the State.

The situation of persons subjected to internal forced and involuntary displacement also remains an area of concern. The United Nations estimates that, as of January, 60 per cent of Libyans have been able to return to their homes in the towns of Bani Walid and Sirte since the end of the fighting. However, several other groups are unable to return home for fear of reprisals. For example, some 35,000 residents of Tawergha who are accused by residents of the nearby town of Misrata of involvement in serious crimes are housed in camps or other accommodation across the country. Many of the men are held by revolutionary brigades in detention, where many have reported being subject to torture.

Let us not forget the situation of women in Libya. Despite some gains for women's rights in previous years, inequality and discrimination in many areas of women's life persist in law and practice. Diverse views exist within Libyan society as to the status of women and their role in society. In the light of the recent decision of the National Transitional Council not to stipulate a minimum percentage for the representation of women in the National Congress, I would like to emphasize that facilitating their stronger representation in public life will be an essential step towards ensuring that the revolution brings meaningful achievements for women and girls across the country.

In addition to addressing ongoing human rights concerns, Libyans are faced with the enormous challenge of addressing past abuses. Those include violations committed during the former regime, as well as violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law committed during the conflict, as documented in the first report of the international commission of inquiry on Libya, mandated by the Human Rights Council (see A/HRC/17/44).

We must not forget that the Libyan people rose up in order to remove a tyrannical ruler whose regime committed atrocious human rights violations against its

people. Torture, unlawful killings and enforced disappearance were widely practised. The families of the disappeared, including over 1,200 prisoners allegedly killed in the 1996 Abu Salim prison massacre, continue to wait for the truth and for justice to be done. Acts amounting to the mere exercise of freedom of expression and association frequently resulted in the death penalty, including after unfair trials before the People's Court and, later, the State Security Court.

I commend the Libyan authorities' stated commitment to transitional justice processes and mechanisms, as they would enable Libya to deal with such abuses. We stand ready to provide assistance. Those processes should lead to the legislative and institutional reforms, including within the security sector, required to ensure justice, accountability and reparations for victims and guarantees of non-repetition, in compliance with international human rights standards. Moreover, international law requires the prosecution of individuals who may be criminally responsible for international crimes.

Furthermore, there remain outstanding questions regarding possible civilian deaths resulting from NATO operations. The commission of inquiry is currently investigating such allegations. Any findings that it reaches will be important in shedding light on the extent to which NATO forces took all feasible measures to protect civilians in all their military operations. Information so far indicates that NATO made efforts to keep civilian casualties to a minimum, but where civilians have been killed and injured, the Alliance should disclose information about all such events and the remedial actions undertaken.

Current investigations by the commission also seek to deepen initial findings into the question of sexual violence, in particular, to ascertain the extent and whether cases were linked to incitement by the command of either side. I call upon all sides, including NATO, to cooperate fully with the commission of inquiry in the current final phase of their investigations into those and other issues.

In that phase of the commission's investigations, members of the Secretariat and the commissioners are currently in Libya to conduct the last of three missions. On 9 March, the commissioners will discuss the findings of their final report with members of the Human Rights Council.

Following the publication of that second report, the focus should be on the implementation of all recommendations issued by the commission. With the support of my Office, the Human Rights Section within UNSMIL, as mandated by the Council, will play an important role in that regard.

In addition to providing Secretariat support to the commission, in October I sent two senior OHCHR staff members to Tripoli, Benghazi and Misrata on a one-week mission to assess needs and to assist in setting the priorities of the human rights component within UNSMIL. Particular attention was given to the issues of transitional justice, detention, women's rights, minorities, migrants, racism and xenophobia in their discussions with Government representatives and emerging civil society actors. With the establishment of the Human Rights Section within UNSMIL, headed by my representative, I deployed OHCHR staff members on a temporary basis to bolster capacity. I have initiated a consultancy to strengthen civil society capacity in monitoring and advocating for human rights protection.

Allow me to conclude by stressing the following points. First, urgent steps need to be taken to put an end to current abuses, particularly those occurring in detention.

Secondly, I welcome the priority attention given by the authorities to transitional justice processes and mechanisms, and encourage them to expeditiously make their commitment to transitional justice a reality. The processes and mechanisms must address abuses committed both by the former regime and by all actors during the conflict, and must be established after an informed national consultation.

Thirdly, in the major undertakings of the coming weeks and months, the authorities should use civil society activists and organizations, including women's and youth groups, as a key resource in addressing a range of social and political challenges. Thorough consultations with civil society groups will be critical in developing lasting solutions to today's challenges.

Finally, I would like to reiterate my Office's commitment to continuing to support the Libyan people in realizing their rights. Working together, UNSMIL, the Human Rights Section and OHCHR headquarters are ready to respond to requests for technical assistance, for example, in the area of legal and institutional reform; to help in consultation

processes, to build capacities, including those of key State institutions, such as the police, the judiciary and penitentiary institutions; and to monitor and report on human rights developments.

Ultimately, the task of the Libyan people is to forge their own future on a firm basis of respect for the rule of law and international human rights standards.

The President: I thank Ms. Pillay for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Libya.

Mr. Shalgham (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting so that we can follow the developing situation in Libya. I would like to welcome Mr. Ian Martin and to thank him for his efforts in Libya. I can say that he has been able to build a strong relationship with the parties concerned. Every time he visits Libya, I meet and speak with him. I believe that his approach will produce optimal results. I would also like to thank Ms. Pillay for her presence here and for her efforts to assess the situation in Libya.

All Council members are aware of what happened in Libya. We experienced an atrocious war, in which acts were committed that run counter to the nature of Libyan society and our Arabic and Islamic culture and precepts. Massacres and rapes were carried out on the orders of Muammar Al-Qadhafi. In one family, the father, grandfather and daughter were raped on Al-Qadhafi's orders. In Zuwara, young girls, aged 14 and 15, were raped, their bloodied and naked bodies thrown into the streets. That was truly a tragedy.

The situation is not bright. There are complications and problems. There is an interim Government and a National Transitional Council (NTC). There is power without legitimacy and legitimacy without power. There are armed young people who need structure and leadership. There are detention centres that we are unaware of, and not subject to, State control. We do not accept and condemn the use of such detention centres. However, the key point is that we will not accept mistakes, nor will we attempt to hide them. Errors have been made and there have been transgressions and complications, but we do not condone or accept them. We will make changes.

There is an electoral law, on which Mr. Abdel Jalil has said that 14,000 comments had been made. I have a number of comments myself and I have shared them with Mr. Jalil. The question of exclusion has been completely rejected. We have simply said that those whose hands have been stained with Libyan blood and those who have stolen money from the Libyan people will face justice. As an Ambassador and Minister under Al-Qadhafi, I will be the first to subject myself to any such judicial proceeding.

We have an interim justice law, which is not yet in full force. There are approximately 8,000 prisoners being held in Tripoli. We have spoken to our brothers there and have said that all individuals who did not commit a crime or who did not participate in any massacres can obtain their passports without delay, but be placed under surveillance.

The 17 February revolution was launched in order to protect laws and human rights. In Benghazi, the revolution was sparked by the Abu Salim prison massacre. It was a revolution for justice and human rights. Ms. Pillay and Mr. Martin did not distinguish between the Tuaregs from near Misrata and those from Algeria; the two groups are quite often confused. The Tuaregs are Libyan citizens who were not affected, but Al-Qadhafi did call on the Tuaregs of Mali and Niger to serve him. We requested that the latter return to their homes. The Libyan Tuaregs, however, are respected people and will remain at home in Libya. The Tuaregs, who originated from black Africa, remained near Misrata following the abolition of slavery. They were not targeted because they were black, but because they supported Al-Qadhafi and took part in rape and other crimes in Misrata. I attempted to bring about reconciliation, but ran out of time. We have asked the religious leaders to intervene for the purposes of reconciliation in Benghazi and Tripoli, and hope that a solution will be found in the near future.

In terms of administrative issues in Libya, I personally believe that we have been slightly off the mark. The country was not divided into governorships or even into states, which creates complications in terms of organizing elections. There is some confusion in that regard. I spoke with Mr. Martin the day before yesterday and told him that it was possible for him and his team to look into those issues and into administrative preparations in Libya.

Armed combatants must not be forgotten. They are the ones who launched the revolution. They are the ones who made the sacrifice. Either we establish a consultative council for them, or some of them can become members of the National Transitional Council. Some are doctors, university professors and lawyers. We cannot exclude or marginalize them. That would be unthinkable. We cannot manage Libya with a single group of people who have lived outside our country for more than 30 years and who are unfamiliar with it. We have said as much in all frankness to our Libyan brothers.

In terms of reconciliation, that is an extremely important issue. The role of reconciliation can be assumed by religious leaders, elders and experts, following the examples set by South Africa or the Kingdom of Morocco. Reconciliation is extremely important. We must reject any exclusionist policy in that process.

Turning to the question of women, statistics show that women account for more than 53 per cent of Libya's population. A reference was made earlier to the 10 per cent rate of political participation by women. I believe that those quotas have been eliminated. In the African Union, we have a gender-based decision that substantially increases the quota for women's legislative and political participation to 50 per cent. We have therefore done away with that 10 per cent quota.

If we want to build a modern society, we cannot leave women out of it, nor can we disregard their role. That is not part of Islamic law. Islam does not leave women out or discriminate against them. Progress cannot be achieved through discrimination. We need at least 30 per cent representation of women, but if we deny the role of women, then we will not see development. In Egypt, in Libya and in Tunisia, women say that they will not vote for someone who does not hear their voice. Vote and voice are actually the same word in Arabic: "saut". So we have to address this issue of women, and we must do so courageously and loudly.

Progress and freedom cannot begin by looking backwards. There was a religious movement in Europe after the Second World War. After such developments, people look to religion and values. That is positive. What we are seeing here are the basic principles and values of Islam — tolerance, co-existence, forgiveness. But Islam does not mean slavery, nor does it mean

mutilation or stoning as punishment. We want the values and precepts of Islam. The Koran stipulates tolerance, forgiveness, kindness towards the family and orphans, and punishment for those who commit murder or who deprive others of their lives or prosperity. Those are the values that we need, not the rhetoric of vengeance.

In Bani Walid, for example, there were several incidents. There is, of course, the whole background with pro- and anti-Qadhafi forces. Some members of my delegation are from Bani Walid, and yes, after 42 years of a closed society and of repression and spilled blood, there were certain internal incidents.

In general terms, there is one overall positive aspect, which is the great freedom that is felt in Libya today, thanks to the new openness and the process of discussion. Democracy makes it possible to manage and handle differences in opinion. Dictatorship imposes agreement. This process of managing differences is something new for us. From its very beginnings, Libya has never had political parties or unions, not even under the king. Only for one year, when it was a British protectorate, did we have political parties. Things take time. Naturally, we have problems. However, freedom, democracy and openness are in full bloom, and the Libyan people yearn for progress.

We are a nation of only 7 million. We have important resources, including human ones. More than 20,000 Libyans have studied in American universities. More than 90 per cent of Libyan women are educated, as are 95 per cent of the men. We also have important natural resources at all levels.

As to the NATO victims, there were four incidents. In Brega, NATO bombarded revolutionary tanks. The commander of the forces told me at the time that the revolutionaries had been conducting an unprogrammed manoeuvre and had thus become victim of the bombing. After another important incident, Al-Qadhafi said that NATO had bombed civilians, but he sent his troops into places such as schools and hospitals where there were civilians. There was also another incident, for which NATO apologized. As to the remainder, one of those responsible had stored weapons in a private home, and that home was supposedly bombed by NATO, even though we have information that it was Al-Qadhafi himself who bombed the house. This is under investigation.

I have a memory I would like to share. There were 1,800 telephone calls between Al-Qadhafi and Mr. Al-Mahmoudi, the Prime Minister at the time, and Mr. Al-Mahmoudi asked the head of the Al Khadra Hospital to put the bodies of Al-Qadhafi's victims in locations that had been bombed by NATO. The head of the hospital responded by saying that the victims' families were refusing to do that. There was a conversation between a father and his son, and the father was saying that his son had been wounded by NATO when the mother's voice was heard from behind saying that that was a lie, and that her son had been injured in a car crash. I repeat, there were 1,800 conversations, which we will transcribe and send the Council a copy. People say that they have opened empty graves and that there were no more bodies to put in them.

On 25 February I said that by March, if NATO did not intervene, Benghazi would become the largest mass grave in the world. Al-Qadhafi had sent a 60-kilometre-long military column to destroy Benghazi. I hope that the accusations against NATO will not be used as an excuse to protect other tyrants. I hope that does not happen.

We all know history. We all know how Poland and France were liberated from Nazism, and how Kuwait rid itself of Saddam Hussein. One of the physicians who was very close to Muammar Al-Qadhafi told me that NATO was so precise that if they wanted to cut off one ear they could leave the other one intact.

As to the list of names, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, the Arab Association for Human Rights and the Public International Law Group came to see us in Libya. We opened the doors of prisons and hospitals to them and they undertook investigations, including of NATO activities.

Two hours ago, I received a message from Tripoli concerning civilian victims of NATO. We have already established a commission to consolidate information and data from the National Transitional Council, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Ministers of Defence, Justice and the Interior, and the Human Rights Council, as Ms. Pillay has stated, so that information can be gathered from sites that were targeted by NATO.

Secondly, there will be consultations with Ambassador Dirk Brengelmann, NATO Assistant Secretary General, who is currently in Libya and has begun talks with the Minister for Foreign Affairs today.

The new Libya is prepared to cooperate with any international investigating body under the auspices of the United Nations. We intend to establish a mechanism to indemnify victims with financial and moral support once we have obtained the results of the investigations. All investigation results will be made public.

One of my assistants showed me orders to burn me and all the members of my family in my village. One of my nephews was found dead. One of my cousins was slain; another saw all his family members gunned down. Had it not been for the protection of the revolutionaries from the north and for NATO, my entire tribe would have been killed. More than 500,000 people would have died in Benghazi. In one hour, 95 people were killed in Benghazi by Al-Qadhafi forces. Two MiG planes bombed Benghazi, and that was not the act of NATO forces. In one month, Misrata, Brega, Ajdabiya, Zawiya, Fashloom and other towns were destroyed. Graves were opened and robbed. NATO did not do that.

With respect to the rhetoric about Christians and Crusaders within the NATO forces, there were people from Qatar, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates who fought together with us. They were not part of a crusade; that was slander promoted by Al-Qadhafi. Al-Qadhafi referred to an older woman who was supposedly the mother of Shalgham — myself — and was reported to have said that she did not wish to recognize him any more. But my mother died more than 10 years ago. It was a lie.

I have spoken frankly. We are not hiding the truth. We have been telling the good and the bad. Once again, on behalf of the Libyan people, I would like to thank the Council for its courage in coming to the salvation of Libya. I thank all countries that sent planes and soldiers to assist and save Libya. King Idris and Al-Qadhafi sold oil to Europe and to America, and we will do so too. There is not one single foreign soldier on Libyan territory, so it is not worthwhile exploring that issue further.

On behalf of the Libyan people, I would like to thank the Council for its great, historic decision to save my homeland.

The President: There are no further names inscribed on my list. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.



Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

6708th meeting

Thursday, 26 January 2012, 10 a.m.
New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Sangqu	(South Africa)
<i>Members:</i>	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Bonne
	Germany	Mr. Eick
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Kumar
	Morocco	Mr. Bouchaara
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zhukov
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Twenty-ninth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2011/807*)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.



The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Twenty-ninth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2011/807*)

The President. Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Côte d'Ivoire to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Albert Koenders, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2011/807*, which contains the twenty-ninth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

I now give the floor to Mr. Koenders.

Mr. Koenders: Mr. President, let me start by stating that it is a great honour and pleasure to address you in person in my capacity as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Côte d'Ivoire since October last year. The first three months of my mission have, of course, focused on the legislative elections, but I would like to start by putting the situation in Côte d'Ivoire into a slightly broader perspective.

Remarkable progress has been registered in Côte d'Ivoire towards restoring normalcy since the end of the violent post-election crisis last year. The security situation is stabilizing, those displaced have started to return, the economy is starting to show resilience, and the legislative elections were held successfully and, I think, most importantly, after last year's crisis, in relative peace, although the final results have yet to be proclaimed and certified. President Ouattara has undertaken important steps to strengthen subregional cooperation, and I think that Côte d'Ivoire is taking

steps towards reclaiming its historical role as a pillar of stability and prosperity in the subregion.

That important progress notwithstanding, significant challenges remain. Côte d'Ivoire is still struggling to recover from the devastating crisis, which took a heavy toll on the country and its people, while many national capacities have been destroyed. The root causes of instability and potential triggers of violence have remained. Important challenges and issues relating to security and national reconciliation should not be underestimated and require, in my view, the political attention of the Council.

The priorities identified by the President and his Government in areas where the United Nations is mandated to provide support remain valid and relevant. The support of United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) is essential to help the Government stabilize the security situation, which includes the reconstitution and reform of security and rule-of-law institutions; the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants; the protection of civilians; facilitating the return of refugees and internally displaced persons; and fostering the crucial process of national reconciliation, early recovery and the promotion and protection of human rights.

The holding of the legislative elections without delay and in a relatively peaceful atmosphere is, in our view, a significant achievement that marked a major step forward in the restoration of constitutional order, more inclusive governance, and the completion of a key unfinished aspect of the peace process. UNOCI worked actively with the Government and all political stakeholders, including the Facilitator, to help ensure that the legislative elections proceeded in a manner that contributes to securing lasting stability in Côte d'Ivoire.

Although voter participation was lower than during the 2010 presidential elections, the turnout, approximately 36 percent, was similar during previous legislative polls in the country, in 1990 and 1995. UNOCI played an important role across the country in support of the authorities which were responsible for the organization and conduct of the polls, while providing the same level of technical and logistical support to the Independent Electoral Commission as was the case during the presidential elections. I would also highlight the fact that the Ivorian security agencies provided effective security, in concert with UNOCI,

The mission and the United Nations country team provided the same level of technical and logistical support to the Independent Electoral Commission as was the case during the presidential elections.

In keeping with the mandate given to me by the Council to certify that all stages of the electoral process were held in accordance with international standards, I will yet have to certify these important elections, and I will do so after the national institutions have evaluated the process. The Constitutional Council, which is currently examining 110 electoral complaints filed by candidates, has announced its decisions on the appeals filed by a number of candidates; their proclamation is expected in early February.

Now that the legislative elections have taken place, it is important to focus attention on some other priority areas, including national reconciliation, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform and consolidation of the security situation, particularly in Abidjan, the west and the border areas. It is, in my view, equally important to focus on addressing the root causes of the Ivorian crisis, including issues such as access to land and imbalanced development. The question of impunity also remains an important concern; it is essential that all those who are responsible for gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law be held accountable, regardless of their political affiliation or camp.

The overall security situation in Côte d'Ivoire has remained relatively calm. However, insecurity in the west, including criminal activities, and the threat of cross-border movements of armed groups and weapons has continued to pose a major challenge. A large number of weapons remain in circulation in Abidjan and throughout the country, a situation which has contributed to the high levels of crime and security incidents involving armed elements. The Government has begun to take measures to address security-related challenges, and we are currently discussing with the Ivorian authorities a concrete set of support measures that the international community could provide in this regard.

Let me conclude by saying that Côte d'Ivoire has made significant progress towards restoring normalcy. Legislative elections mark the completion of a key aspect of the peace process and the implementation of

the Ouagadougou Political Agreement. Notwithstanding the progress made in the past months, Côte d'Ivoire is still struggling to recover from the post-electoral crisis and will continue to need the Council's support in addition to that provided by other international and regional partners. I can assure the Council that the United Nations, through UNOCI, continues to make every effort to support the Government in addressing key challenges and to help the Government to materialize its vision towards reclaiming its historical role as a pillar of stability and prosperity in the subregion.

The President: I thank Mr. Koenders for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Bamba (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I should like to begin by wishing you, Sir, and the other representatives present good health, happiness and peace throughout 2012. I also take this opportunity to convey my delegation's warmest congratulations to you on your accession to the presidency of the Council this month.

My delegation thanks the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Albert Koenders, for his excellent briefing on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire, which accurately portrayed the reality on the ground. I also congratulate him on his outstanding work and on the perfect understanding of the situation he has demonstrated in his brief tenure.

It has been nine months since the post-electoral crisis in Côte d'Ivoire came to an end. The toll in human lives, estimated at approximately 3,000, would have been higher without the decisive involvement of the United Nations in protecting the civilian population. Indeed, acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter and in keeping with the mandate defined in resolution 1975 (2011), the United Nations saved an untold number of lives. In hindsight, we can better grasp the entire scope of the United Nations intervention in Côte d'Ivoire and the full meaning it gives to the concept of the responsibility to protect. We must clearly state that we were on the verge of genocide in Côte d'Ivoire during the post-electoral crisis.

We are therefore in a good position to echo the Secretary-General's statement to the conference on the

responsibility to protect convened on 18 January by the Stanley Foundation in New York. The Secretary-General said that the principle of the responsibility to protect is a fundamental humanitarian principle that is here to stay. My delegation commends the Secretary-General's decision to instruct his Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect to consider ways to make effective use of the provisions of Articles VI, VII and VIII of the United Nations Charter with a view to better operationalizing that principle. We look forward eagerly to the results of his study.

My delegation notes the excellent report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) contained in document S/2011/807*, and of course endorses the conclusions contained therein. The report correctly notes the significant progress that has been achieved in a number of areas, including the peaceful legislative elections held on 11 December 2011. The report also underscores, however, some significant challenges ahead. I should like to make a few brief remarks on issues that my delegation deems to be critical.

I turn first to the stabilization of the security situation, which is manageable in Abidjan but also requires considerable resources. This is due to the high number of light weapons in circulation and the presence of numerous common criminals who escaped detention during the crisis. The security situation in the western part of the country remains a source of ongoing concern owing to the recurrent activities of mercenaries and militias, especially on the border with Liberia, which is densely forested and difficult to control. My delegation believes that the optimization of the military resources of UNOCI and the United Nations Mission in Liberia in the context of inter-mission cooperation has been a successful experiment that should be pursued, as it provides a deterrent to potential or real threats of stabilization.

The subregional aspect of the security situation in the border zone actually extends to the entire Mano River region and encompasses such cross-border threats as piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, drug trafficking, money-laundering and the terrorist threats posed by Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and Boko Haram, as well as the influx of weapons from Libya. The issue must therefore be addressed in the context of a collective security system that includes Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. Indeed, that was the purpose behind the meeting of the Chiefs of Staff of

the four countries that was held from 22 to 25 January in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

In this regard, my delegation commends South Africa's initiative to convene on 12 January a high-level debate of the Security Council (see S/PV.6702), personally presided by President Zuma, on the critical cooperation, under Chapter VIII of the Charter, between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, in particular the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, in the prevention, management and resolution of regional crises.

Secondly, with respect to security sector reform (SSR), my delegation believes that it is a key element of the entire post-crisis normalization process inasmuch as it forges a direct, positive link to national reconciliation that triggers a virtuous chain reaction in other areas of the post-conflict architecture. However, national ownership is essential to the SSR process, as was recognized in the conclusions reached last year in the Security Council debate (see S/PV.6630) held under the Nigerian presidency, to which we pay tribute.

Côte d'Ivoire intends to secure national ownership of SSR through the holding of public hearings on security and defence, which will include the convening of a national dialogue between the people and the army. We seek an interactive exchange in which the people's perspective enriches the reform process. Our goal is for the people in all their aspects, including soldiers and the army, to assume ownership of the reform and ultimately for the army to be reconciled with the population. Once national consensus has been achieved, SSR must be geared to creating a reunified, professional, disciplined republican army subject to civilian executive authority, respectful of the rule of law and mindful of human rights.

Thirdly, with respect to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), I note that our experience of this process over several years has led us to conclude that the cantonment of former combatants in recruitment centres was counterproductive. We therefore feel that vetting is key to the process. Indeed, accurate vetting will allow us to select those who should remain in the new army and ensure that those who are not selected will be directed forthwith to technical centres where they will receive practical training to assist their reintegration into working life.

Moreover, we are planning innovative approaches, concerning the establishment of a reserve force to undertake non-military activities, in particular civil construction and agricultural projects.

Fourthly, with respect to humanitarian assistance, let us recall that, at the height of the post-electoral crisis a year ago, we had 1 million internally displaced persons and 500,000 refugees in neighbouring countries. Today, there are no more than 185,000 internally displaced persons and 161,000 refugees in neighbouring countries. We are pursuing our efforts to bring all Ivorians home. We want that to take place on a voluntary basis and in the context of a tripartite agreement framework between Côte d'Ivoire, the host country and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Four such agreements have been concluded — with Liberia, Ghana, Togo and Guinea. Based on our experience as part of that process, all indications are that the pace of return would increase if people had confidence in assurances with regard to living conditions and security. In that regard, there is a need to build 17,000 housing units and 100 health centres.

My delegation welcomes the \$8 million provided by the Central Emergency Response Fund to address dire situations. We also welcome the recent trip to Côte d'Ivoire by Ms. Catherine Bragg, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, during which she launched the 2012 consolidated appeal intended to raise \$173 million, which is the level of resources needed by the humanitarian sector to address the needs of more than 2 million vulnerable people.

Also on the humanitarian front, it is worth noting the growing awareness on the issue of gender, in particular with regard to sexual violence. Rape victims are increasingly being informed of the treatment available to them and are being encouraged to take advantage of their legal rights. The Minister for Families, Women and Children has been responsible for significant progress in that area.

With regard to health, the President's free health care initiative, which has been in place for a year, will end this month. A system for participatory medical coverage will then be put in place, following a study currently under way. In the meantime, free treatment will continue to be provided for the most disadvantaged sectors of the population, in particular

children under the age of six and pregnant women without means, who will be provided free birthing kits.

Fifthly, with regard to national reconciliation and the pursuit of political dialogue, the Commission on Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation is now fully operational, is expanding consultations and appears to be setting up its functions for the long term, as reconciliation is not a time-bound event but, instead, a process that takes time.

Pursuing a political process is an inescapable requirement in that context — a process that makes it possible for all of the country's political stakeholders to develop political maturity and to exercise their constitutional rights. It is for that reason that we should acknowledge — without self-satisfaction — that the holding of peaceful legislative elections in Côte d'Ivoire just seven months after emerging from the crisis is an outcome that merits being highlighted. In addition, while we regret that the party formerly in power did not participate, we hope that, for the sake of the upcoming municipal and regional elections, the *Front populaire ivoirien* will take advantage of the opportunity to participate, which will only benefit Côte d'Ivoire's democracy. My delegation will soon submit to the United Nations an official request for assistance for those elections.

Lastly, I would like to say that in order to overcome all the challenges to which I have referred, my country more than ever needs the invaluable support of the international community, first and foremost that of the United Nations — and in particular that of its leading organ, the Security Council.

My Government will soon submit a formal request for a reconsideration of the sanctions regime on Côte d'Ivoire established by resolution 1572 (2002), with a view to the partial or full lifting of the embargo currently in place.

Peace and stability are slowly but surely making progress in Côte d'Ivoire. My Government would therefore officially like to invite the Security Council to visit Côte d'Ivoire from 22 to 30 March, in order that its members can have an opportunity to genuinely see the progress that has been achieved on the ground.

Côte d'Ivoire is a country open to the outside world, and it intends to once again pursue its natural calling. It is for that reason that, soon after being sworn in, His Excellency President Alassane Ouattara carried

out numerous State visits, beginning with his partners in neighbouring countries and in the subregion. As I speak, President Ouattara is on an official visit to France. Two weeks ago, he met with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton of the United States. And, at the beginning of the year, he received China's Minister for Foreign Affairs in the course of his official visit to Côte d'Ivoire.

The African Development Bank is preparing to bring its headquarters to Côte d'Ivoire.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire is returning to the international stage, ready to once again take up its role as an anchor of stability and growth in the service of international peace, security and cooperation.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.



Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6709th meeting

Thursday, 26 January 2012, 3 p.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Sangqu	(South Africa)
<i>Members:</i>	Azerbaijan	Mr. Musayev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Berger
	Guatemala	Mr. Briz Gutiérrez
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

Letter dated 17 January 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2012/42)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

Letter dated 17 January 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2012/42)

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Chad, Mali and Niger to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/42, which contains a letter dated 17 January 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Pascoe.

Mr. Pascoe: I appreciate the opportunity to brief the Security Council on the inter-agency assessment mission dispatched by the Secretary-General to look into the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region.

The mission, led by Mr. Sam Ibok, Deputy Director of the Africa II Division of the Department of Political Affairs — who is seated right behind me — took place from 7 to 23 December. It included representatives of the African Union, the International Organization for Migration and United Nations entities working in the humanitarian, development, political, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism fields.

The mission had working sessions in Mali, Niger, Chad and Mauritania. It also visited Abuja, Nigeria, where it met with senior officials of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and with Nigeria's Minister of Defence to discuss regional efforts to counter terrorism. The team also made stops in Dakar, Senegal, for guidance and debriefing with the

Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, Mr. Saïd Djinnit.

The mission found, especially among the civil and political leaders of the region, a remarkable openness to engage on the nature and enormity of the challenges confronting the countries. It was clear throughout that most of the challenges pre-dated the Libyan conflict. On the question of returnees from Libya, the topmost priority for the countries visited was to feed and to reintegrate the vulnerable returnees and to help the affected communities cope with the loss of remittances.

Underlying structural challenges and a looming food crisis in the area compound those immediate problems. There were strong appeals for the United Nations, working in tandem with the African Union and others, as well as with the new authorities in Libya, to find a mutually satisfactory framework for rebuilding relationships between the Sahel region and the countries of transit and destination.

The mission also found that the leaders of the Sahel region understood the need to protect the rights of both the migrants and the host communities, especially in the light of recent abuses. It held extensive consultations on how to promote the security, economic and employment conditions for managing labour and migration issues within the region.

The mission also recognized that greater efforts needed to be made to identify the criminal and militia elements that are reigniting the embers of past rebellions, using weapons that had been smuggled into the region from Al-Qadhafi's arsenal during the fighting in Libya. The Council will recall that Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ian Martin informed the Council yesterday that there is little evidence so far that man-portable air defence systems, or some of the other heavy weaponry, have been smuggled out of Libya in significant numbers to the subregion (see S/PV.6707).

The recommendations of Mr. Ibok's mission fall into three categories.

The first is support and capacity-building for ongoing national initiatives to address the immediate humanitarian, socio-economic and security challenges in the region, as well as for enhanced efforts by the United Nations country teams, especially in building a

more coherent approach for the implementation of humanitarian and development programmes.

The second is support for existing regional mechanisms, including capacity-building and enhanced coordination arrangements, on issues related to the control of borders and information-sharing on cross-border activity, such as the smuggling of weapons and human trafficking. This would include regional mechanisms to address the growing activities of terrorist organizations that are building networks that reach out from the Maghreb and the Sahel zone to terrorist groups like Boko Haram that are not traditionally part of the region.

The third is support at the international level. The United Nations, in cooperation with the African Union, needs to mobilize greater international support for the Sahel region to address the challenges of human insecurity and underdevelopment, as well as terrorist and security issues. Regional actors have made clear that there is an urgent need to deal with the upsurge in terrorist groups and the growing threat they pose. However, in their view, it is critically necessary to also address the socio-economic situation, including youth unemployment, the food security crisis looming over the horizon and underdevelopment. They have called for more comprehensive efforts to address the problem of drugs and weapons-smuggling, as well as the smuggling of other products, such as petroleum foodstuffs, to fund terrorist organizations.

Recent developments in the region reinforce the concerns consistently expressed to the mission by its interlocutors. The security situation in Mali has significantly worsened following heavy fighting on 17 and 18 January between Government forces and Tuareg militias in northern Mali in an area close to the borders with Niger and Algeria. The Tuareg fighters, members of the self-proclaimed Azawad National Liberation Movement, assert that they are seeking to drive the Government out of several towns in the North where Tuareg communities are dominant. The attacks come at a particularly sensitive time for Mali, with the approach of presidential and legislative elections and a major constitutional reform referendum. This is further complicated by the drought throughout the region and the worsening food situation currently affecting Mali, Niger and Chad.

In neighbouring Niger, President Mahamadou Issoufou voiced concern on 22 January over the danger

of similar violence occurring in his country, and affirmed his Government's determination to avert the spread of Tuareg attacks to Niger. Although no recent attacks have been reported, there is growing concern that the resurgent Tuareg rebellion in Mali could in fact spread to Niger. The security equilibrium in the northern regions of Niger and Mali is especially volatile due to the enhanced presence and heightened activity there of the Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb group and other criminal networks that use these vast, poorly guarded and largely desert territories as safe havens and training grounds for their illicit operations.

If we are to be able to deal with the challenges in the Sahel region and to have a comprehensive, long-lasting impact, we will need to put in place a mechanism that would bring together all the affected countries and major outside actors in a coordinated manner to discuss the issues and devise solutions. Other countries in the neighbourhood outside the Sahel region certainly need to be brought into the security and development discourse.

As we all know, one of the obstacles to increased cooperation is structural. African and United Nations efforts to deal with the problems of the region are spread over many groupings and organizations. For example, Nigeria and Niger belong to ECOWAS, Chad is a member of the Economic Community of Central African States, and Mauritania and Algeria are in the Arab-Maghreb Union. In addition, none of the existing United Nations presences in the region — the United Nations Office for West Africa, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya — has a mandate that covers the broad region of the Sahel and the multiple challenges confronted by the countries concerned. Despite these limitations, we have been encouraged by the readiness of all the countries inside and outside the region, as well as regional organizations and the United Nations system, to work together to develop a more comprehensive and coherent approach.

Let me conclude by emphasizing the urgency of the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel. It is critical that the international community respond to the strong and consistent calls of the concerned countries to support ongoing initiatives. As I have noted, some of the problems are directly related to the fall of the Al-Qadhafi regime in Libya, but the mission's interlocutors emphasized that most of the

problems are long-standing ones, and current draught conditions make it obvious that the overall situation could deteriorate quickly. On 29 January, at the African Union summit, a ministerial-level meeting is planned to review this situation and to develop approaches to deal with the many problems of the region. The report of the December mission will be discussed at that meeting. We will endeavour to keep the Council informed of developments in the region as time progresses.

The President: I thank Mr. Pascoe for his briefing.

I now give the floor to those representatives of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe for his briefing on the report of the assessment mission to the Sahel (S/2012/42). The report provides a basis for discussing the challenges facing the region in the aftermath of the Libyan crisis.

Pakistan is extremely concerned at the report's conclusion that the humanitarian and economic challenges confronting the Sahel region have been exacerbated by the fallout from the Libyan crisis. The influx of returnees has placed an added burden on the already strained situation of host communities that had been facing food insecurity, shrinking economic opportunities, and lack of health and social infrastructure. This has also resulted in the loss of remittances that were so vital to the economies of these countries.

Although the report does not quantify the economic impact of these factors, what is apparent is that the countries of the Sahel have become unwitting victims of the Libyan crisis. Therefore, there is an urgent need to redress the economic impact of the crisis on these countries through an appropriate assistance package.

As regards the security impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region, the report confirms our fears that large quantities of weapons and ammunition may have been smuggled into the region from Libya, which could further fuel the activities of criminal and terrorist groups. Although there is still no confirmed evidence, man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) may also have found their way into the region. If that were the case, these weapons could fall into the hands of

terrorists, with potentially devastating consequences. This should be a matter for alarm to the countries of the region, as well as to members of the Council.

It is obvious that, despite the caution advocated by some members of the Council as the crisis was unfolding in Libya, its implications were totally overlooked. The region has now been left to deal with its aftermath. Immediate steps must be taken to address the problem of the proliferation of all types of weapons. In this regard, we look forward to the report of the Panel of Experts on Libya, pursuant to paragraph 5 of resolution 2017 (2011), in particular concerning MANPADS.

The report further highlights the fact that there has been an increase in terrorist activity and organized crime in the Sahel. The possible establishment of linkages among various terrorist groups could be a destabilizing factor for the region. We support steps being taken at the national and regional levels to counter that trend. There is also a need to build the capacities of these countries to deal with these challenges.

The need for better coordination between various mechanisms for addressing the crisis in the region is underscored in the report. We would appreciate receiving more details about how the existing United Nations presence is assisting the Sahel countries. On the whole, it would have been better if the mission had restricted the scope of its work to the impact of the Libyan crisis on the region, which is of immediate concern to the Security Council. The long-term development problems and their solutions require more detailed analysis and examination by relevant agencies. The Security Council is not the appropriate body to discuss those aspects.

In conclusion, we would like to highlight one recommendation in the report that is intriguing to us. The report talks about the application of the principle of "hot pursuit". We are not aware if there is any such agreed principle in international law, and its appearance in a United Nations document is not understandable. We believe that the introduction of any such notion will have negative implications, not only for the stability of the region but also for the development of legal norms. We would therefore ask the Secretariat to remove that recommendation from the report.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Lynn Pascoe for his statement and for the assessment work that has been carried out by the United Nations, in close cooperation with the African Union and on the basis of the needs expressed by the authorities of the States of region.

The assessment report's (see S/2012/42) presentation of the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region leads to two observations: first, about the seriousness of the large number of security and humanitarian challenges in the region and, secondly, about the need for the United Nations to adopt a more integrated approach to help the States of the region to overcome those challenges. Let me turn first to the challenges for the region.

In both the humanitarian and security fronts, the States of the Sahel region face recurring problems that require addressing with greater coordination and solutions focused on the underlying issues. Population movements, which often include migrants returning to their countries of origin following the crisis in Libya, as well as the spread of weapons in the region are, as has been pointed out, additional destabilizing factors in an already fragile region.

While the problems of the Sahel clearly predate the Libyan crisis, they have nevertheless not been the object of sufficiently effective responses. Among the underlying problems are recurring food crises, acts of terrorism by Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and Boko Haram, and trafficking in weapons, drugs and even human beings – the common denominator being that they all concern issues that cross borders and, to varying degrees concern all the countries of the Sahel. Quite often, States lack the resources to address problems beyond their borders that contribute to destabilization in their region. In that regard, it is especially relevant that the Security Council address the question of the Sahel in all its aspects, which is something it has never done.

Given the cross-border threat of those threats, it is crucial that the States of region carry out cooperation in the areas of security and development, in particular when it comes to border controls. Solutions must first of all come from the States themselves. The latest ministerial conference held in Nouakchott this week shows that this process is under way. The international community should act to help by supporting the Governments of the region and providing assistance for

their initiatives. The matter of the crucial role of coordination leads me to my second point, namely, the role of the United Nations.

We are convinced that the United Nations has a role to play in the Sahel. At this moment, no regional organization in Africa brings together all the countries concerned by the problems of the Sahel. Only the United Nations, by virtue of its universality and neutrality, includes all the States of the Sahel and neighbouring States of the region. It is therefore essential that the United Nations adopt a more integrated approach internally to help the States of the region in the areas of security and development. It should do so by aligning its agencies, funds and programmes to work in the same direction. Moreover, we believe that such a strategy should not entail the establishment of additional bureaucratic mechanisms. Optimally, it should rely on, and strengthen, existing structures. In that regard, we call on the Secretariat to keep the Council informed of efforts made in that regard.

I should also like to recall that in 2011 the European Union devoted significant short- and long-term budgetary resources to a strategy for the Sahel that provided for many concrete partnership projects focused on development, security and political dialogue. The European Union is therefore committed. It has appointed a coordinator and is currently placing every tool at his disposal, while making national ownership the guiding principle. In its approach, the United Nations should take into account the European Union initiative, so as to avoid pointless duplication. Only in that way, will we be able to ensure that the efforts of the United Nations are adapted to the realities on the ground and the efforts of other partners in the international community.

In conclusion, I should like to point out that France has just circulated a draft statement to the press, which we hope will later be adopted in order to demonstrate the commitment of the Security Council on this issue.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for scheduling this briefing on West Africa and the Sahel. I would also like to thank Lynn Pascoe for his briefing on the security situation in the region. I welcome the renewed international focus on this issue, which the Council will discuss again next month.

The issues affecting the countries of the Sahel are complex and have many root causes. Indeed, as Mr. Ian Martin told the Council yesterday (see S/PV.6707), many predate the Libyan conflict. Addressing those problems will require a coordinated response. We are grateful for the work of the assessment mission in bringing together States and regional bodies to share knowledge and discuss solutions. The nature of the challenges facing those countries means they will not be resolved without their working together. In that spirit, and despite recent differences, it is also vital that the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) stand together with the countries of the Sahel.

The Council must focus its efforts where our expertise lies, that is, on issues of peace and security. We must bring to bear the expertise of the rest of the United Nations family in delivering humanitarian support to affected States.

It is clear that the Libyan crisis has impacted on the different countries of the Sahel to different degrees. However, weapons proliferation, illicit trafficking of goods and food insecurity are common challenges to them all. I would like to make three points on those issues.

First, there has undoubtedly been an upsurge in weapons proliferation across the Sahel. The main cause of that has been the gradual return to Mali and Niger of Tuareg rebels who fought for the Al-Qadhafi regime. The role of ECOWAS is crucial in mitigating the impact of that proliferation. I encourage ECOWAS to continue its efforts to deal with the challenges posed by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and to aid those displaced by the crisis to return home.

Secondly, on trafficking of illicit goods, it is clear that, regardless of events in Libya, the Sahel is seen as an attractive location for traffickers due to the low risks of monitoring and apprehension by State bodies. I welcome the regional judicial platform as a mechanism for cross-border judicial cooperation, as well as the national efforts of the affected States. But more bilateral support for capacity-building is needed if those countries are to develop the relevant institutions for tackling this issue.

Thirdly, in a region that suffers from food shortages on an annual basis, the crisis in Libya has been an exacerbating factor. We call on all Governments in the region to facilitate continued

access for all humanitarian actors. In turn, the United Nations must, with its development partners and regional organizations, ensure that it coordinates its response appropriately and works with regional Governments to address long-term drivers of food insecurity.

Finally, the United Kingdom is committed to working with the Nigerian Government to support their efforts towards the effective implementation of a comprehensive strategy to tackle security threats in Nigeria. The British Government has condemned the recent terrorist attacks in Kano, where more than 200 people were killed, and is deeply concerned by the increasing number of attacks in Nigeria claimed by the Islamist sect Boko Haram.

Attacks have predominantly affected northern Nigeria, and targets over the past year have included Government institutions, security forces and places of worship, as well as international organizations. Those included an attack on a United Nations building in Abuja in August 2011, which killed 23 people.

The United Kingdom has shared expertise on counter-terrorism policy, doctrine and legal frameworks, and has provided assistance with specific capabilities, such as managing the consequences of terrorist attacks. We will continue to support Nigerians' efforts to counter terrorism in their country and the region.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): Like others, I want to thank Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe for his briefing. I would also like to place on record our appreciation for the Secretary-General's initiatives to depute an integrated technical assessment team to study the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region for the mission's comprehensive report (see S/2012/42).

Military operations carried out ostensibly for the protection of civilians have clearly resulted in millions of civilians in West and Central Africa and the Maghreb being adversely affected. The report has brought out in considerable detail the multidimensional adverse impact of the conflict in the security, economic and humanitarian areas. In a relatively short period of time, the countries of the Sahel region have had to contend with an influx of nearly half a million returnees, as well as with a large inflow of arms and ammunition. Given that each returnee supported in excess of seven individuals back home, some 3 million

people have lost their source of livelihood. The loss of remittances and high unemployment among young people have further exacerbated food insecurity and the nutrition crisis.

As the report notes, in some areas terrorist groups, including Al-Qaida, are filling the humanitarian vacuum. Additionally, the loss of tourism, the suspension of investment, increased expenditure on defence and the strain on basic social services such as health and education have all stretched the resources of Governments in the region.

Most of the countries in the Sahel region have limited institutional capacity and resources to deal with such a multitude of problems. In addition, several problems, such as the proliferation of arms, terrorism, illicit drug trafficking, border management and others, have a regional dimension and need to be tackled through regional cooperation.

We therefore support the recommendations made by the assessment team and believe that a comprehensive strategy needs to be developed and implemented at the national, regional and international levels. The primary focus of such a strategy should be to support the capacity-building of national institutions in the security and socio-economic fields. The countries concerned should implement all legal and administrative measures to combat terrorism and organized crime in accordance with resolution 1373 (2001) and other relevant regional and international instruments. United Nations agencies, including the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, should extend technical and financial support for the implementation of those measures.

At the same time, development assistance to and cooperation with the countries of the region should be expanded to support the Governments' multisectoral reintegration initiatives, with a strong focus on conflict prevention, social cohesion and protection, as well as on livelihood support for returnees. Employment-intensive development programmes will go a long way towards reintegrating returnees with the local communities and preventing them from becoming an easy catch for terrorist groups.

It is also necessary to support the regional initiatives of the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States. Technical

support should be extended to them to develop coherent strategies for transnational problems. In that connection, we welcome the steps being taken by regional and subregional organizations such as ECOWAS, which include regional plans of action to address illicit drug trafficking, organized crime and drug abuse, and we believe that their reach should be expanded to cover all countries in the Sahel that have been affected by the Libyan conflict. The African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism should also be strengthened to provide for cooperation among member States and regional mechanisms.

The African Union (AU) was sidelined in the implementation of resolution 1373 (2001). The consequences of that conflict are, however, being suffered by the countries of Africa. The lesson to be learned from this is clear. The United Nations must partner with the AU in the resolution of African conflicts. With respect to the strategy for addressing the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel, the United Nations must integrate its plans with the efforts of the AU. The relevant United Nations agencies should support the regional and subregional organizations and should assist them with capacity-building and in monitoring their implementation. The United Nations offices in the region, including the United Nations Office for West Africa, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and the United Nations Office to the African Union should look into practical and concrete ways to strengthen the efforts of national Governments and regional institutions in order to enhance coherence and coordination.

The onus is on the Council to ensure that the Libyan crisis does not further exacerbate the fragile security and socio-economic conditions in the Sahel region.

Mr. Pankin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Pascoe for his thorough briefing. We recognize the great significance of the assessment mission, and in particular, as the author of the report (see S/2012/42) said, the fact that the mission took place in cooperation with regional and subregional organizations.

We carefully analysed the document and the recommendations it contains, which confirm that the consequences of the Libyan crisis, the real scope of which is only beginning to come to light, are a serious threat to security and stability in the entire region.

Moreover, the negative effect is also evident beyond its borders and not only on the African continent.

We are especially concerned by the uncontrolled spread of weapons in Libya and beyond its borders as a result of the conflict. The theft of weapons, including man-portable air defence systems (MANPADs), from Libyan army warehouses and their further trans-shipment abroad, sharply increases the risk of terrorism. That is one concrete but not exhaustive example among those that are cited in the report before us today.

That situation persists even as the Libyan authorities have no opportunity to fully control the situation in their country or to prevent weapons from falling into the hands of terrorist elements. We recall that, according to current assessments, as many as 5,000 MANPADs are unaccounted for. We must therefore conclude that, given the regional realities — military and political instability, socio-economic problems, lack of border control and smuggling — it is only a matter of time before Libyan MANPADs appear in the hands of terrorists and on the black market.

Resolution 2017 (2011), adopted upon Russia's initiative, is aimed at preventing those risks and threats, and lays the foundation for collective action by the entire international community. In that context, in interacting with regional players and in solving the problems that confront the countries of the Sahel in this post-hot phase of the Libyan crisis, it is necessary to exploit the potential of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) to support the initiatives of the Sahel countries in countering threats to their security.

Of course, full and effective implementation of resolution 2017 (2011) is very important. We look forward to the timely preparation of the report of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), which we hope will contain specific, results-oriented recommendations. Also, bearing in mind separate groundwork in the report of the assessment mission, it is our view that Secretariat entities, including the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and other United Nations agencies, will make a significant contribution to preparing materials for the Sanctions Committee.

The Sahel mission identified one other very serious problem — the mass exodus from Libya of migrants from African countries, which complicates the already complex socio-economic situation in the

region. Migrants in motion can become easy prey for criminal groups, especially those advocating extremist views. We need an urgent programme to reintegrate migrants. That is a complex challenge for the Sahel countries and regional agencies.

The concerted efforts of regional authorities and the support of the international community, in particular that of the United Nations, are important to countering the threat. Coordinated action by the United Nations system, based on national priorities, is essential.

In developing a strategy to combat the consequences of the Libyan crisis, a critical and decisive role must be played by States of the region.

With respect to the report's idea of establishing some type of framework mechanism to help Sahel countries deal with security problems, decisions in that regard must be taken by the States of the region themselves, with due respect for their sovereignty.

Finally, the threats unleashed like a genie from a bottle by the Libyan conflict are the fruit of the use-of-force scenario elected by some members of the international community to resolve the Libyan conflict and of the arbitrary interpretation of the provisions of resolution 1973 (2011), which is an object lesson for us all.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Lynn Pascoe for the report he has introduced (see S/2012/42) and, at the same time, underscore the joint work carried out by the United Nations and the African Union through the assessment mission and the preparation of the report before us. It is clear proof of the necessary cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

The aspirations of the Libyan people to make their country into a democracy based on the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for its citizens ran up against the despotism of Colonel Al-Qadhafi's dictatorship. Unfortunately, the crisis unleashed by the violent response of the regime negatively affected not only the Libyan population but also neighbouring countries and the region in general.

The numerous manifestations and dimensions of the impact of the Libyan crisis on the countries of the Sahel region continue to be of concern. Therefore, we believe it necessary to take prompt action in support of the efforts and initiatives of States and regional and

subregional organizations to resolve the security problems related to the situation.

The report of the assessment team offers specific recommendations, a careful analysis of which will enable us to move forward in formulating initiatives and programmes based on the principle of national ownership, the establishment of a clear division of responsibilities among stakeholders, effective coordination and coherence in activities, and the identification of clear priorities.

A return to normalcy in Libya and a prompt economic recovery are critical if the actions of the Organization in the Sahel region are to be effective and conducive to finding sustainable solutions. The entire United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, must remain committed to achieving a prosperous and peaceful Libya, which in turn will be a factor of stability and well-being for the entire region.

As pointed out in the mission's report, the crisis in Libya further exacerbated an already precarious security situation in the Sahel region. A number of factors that threaten the stability of the countries in the subregion have deteriorated. The Organization as a whole must act to provide immediate assistance in order to resolve current problems and at the same time contribute to long-term solutions to structural problems.

Returnees and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons are among the main repercussions on which we need to focus our attention. As emphasized by the authorities of the countries of the Sahel region, the priority must be on establishing, developing and improving the capacities of national institutions and regional mechanisms to resolve these problems.

The human rights of returnees must be respected, and they must be given economic alternatives that will enable them to reintegrate themselves in their home countries. At the same time, we must promote an improvement of social conditions in the communities so that the impact of returnees on the economies of the countries in the region will be minimized, paying particular attention to the relationship between security and development.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a concern that requires decisive international cooperation to achieve a sustainable solution. Strengthening border control by providing technological

and financial resources; establishing effective judicial cooperation agreements; the monitoring, marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons; exchange of information and assistance in implementing applicable international norms in this area are specific areas where we must prioritize our action in order to prevent an exacerbation of these risk factors that could further threaten the security of the States in the region.

The magnitude of the threats to security in the countries of the subregion described in the report requires the adoption of initiatives that recognize the nexus between development and security in the countries of the subregion. Such strategies will also require the leadership of national authorities and close cooperation with the international stakeholders, in particular the United Nations through its offices to the African Union, in Western Africa and Central Africa, as well as such regional and subregional actors as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States.

Mr. Berger (Germany): First of all, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Pascoe for his briefings to the Security Council on the situation in the Sahel. I would also like to welcome the report of the assessment mission to the region (see S/2012/42).

The report confirms a worrying picture of the situation in the Sahel region and related security, economic and humanitarian concerns. Responding to the crisis, Germany is currently carrying out financial and technical cooperation projects in the region in the amount of approximately \$10 million. We are particularly concerned that the underlying structural problems pre-dating the conflict in Libya — mainly underdevelopment, migration and climate-related effects — have not or not sufficiently been addressed.

A first analysis of the existing national and regional measures to tackle those issues shows the need for enhanced cooperation among the affected States in the region and a better coordination of the international community's assistance. Measures to overcome those shortcomings should address both immediate requirements and the structural deficits. They should include support for the ongoing initiatives of Governments in the region and the strengthening of existing regional mechanisms.

Continuous dialogue with countries like Algeria and Nigeria in security matters is important. Cooperation mechanisms with the new authorities in

Libya should be further strengthened. All international activities to destroy and control weapons in Libya, to which Germany contributes, are highly relevant. Renewed interest in regional cooperation among the Maghreb countries might also offer new perspectives.

At the same time, the coordination of the different and ongoing United Nations activities in the region should be improved. Such measures to address different shortcomings should also be conceived in consideration of the European Union Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel. That Strategy, which focuses mainly on Mali, Mauritania and Niger, combines development and security issues and will be funded with an additional €150 million. The Strategy will be implemented in close cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union.

In that regard, we welcome the fact that the African Union participated in the United Nations joint assessment mission, and we appreciate the work done by the mission. We feel that in the future, the United Nations Office for West Africa, which is already working closely with many countries of the region, could increase its focus on security threats in the whole Sahel area.

In order to create added value to initiatives already under way, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General could contribute to encouraging regional cooperation among the Sahel countries in the fight against terrorism and organized crime, in close coordination with concerned African regional organizations, especially ECOWAS, and other international partners.

Finally, I would like to welcome the inclusion of the topic of the impacts of climate change on the security environment in the report of the assessment mission. We support the draft press statement submitted by the representative of France.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Pascoe for his briefing.

The Libyan conflict has had a serious impact on the political, security, economic and humanitarian situation in the Sahel region. The large-scale return of foreign nationals has created heavy economic and social burdens for the countries in the region. The proliferation of weapons has further encouraged cross-

border organized crime and terrorism in the region. The negative impact of the Libyan situation will continue to grow, posing a sustained threat to peace and stability in the region. China expresses its grave concern in this regard.

In order to eliminate those negative impacts, the countries of the region have made positive efforts to assist their own nationals to return and integrate into local communities, and have worked to strengthen border control and cooperation in justice and law enforcement. The Economic Community of West African States and other subregional organizations have made full use of existing mechanisms in coordinating the relevant efforts of the countries in the region. China expresses its appreciation in this regard.

In the process of addressing the Libyan issue, the concerns of Africans should receive due attention. Africa's views should be duly respected. The negative impact of the Libyan conflict should not be shouldered by Africa alone. The international community should provide active assistance to the countries and organizations of the region, seriously consider and effectively implement the relevant recommendations of the report of the assessment mission (see S/2012/42), and in that process enhance communication with the countries and regional organizations. Relevant United Nations agencies should give full play to their respective expertise to gain more international support for the region.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General Pascoe for his briefing. The United States would also like to thank Special Representative Djinnit for his continued leadership in the United Nations Office for West Africa and in the Sahel region. We greatly appreciate the work that went into the United Nations inter-agency mission to the Sahel and its subsequent report (see S/2012/42).

The report provides a significant number of recommendations for our collective consideration, and while they are all worthy of deliberation, today I will focus specifically on those that relate to arms proliferation and terrorism, the humanitarian situation and food insecurity.

While there have been measured successes, we remain concerned about the threats posed by the illicit trafficking of arms and by terrorism, and we welcome the recommendations on those challenges put forth in the report of the assessment mission. We concur that

we must address the situation at the national, regional and international levels through an overarching framework that includes all of the affected countries. The United Nations, along with the African Union and other relevant organizations, could play a greater role in coordinating those efforts.

We will continue to promote improved regional efforts to combat arms proliferation and terrorism, and we will tailor our assistance to facilitate that process. For example, we are fully committed to working actively in the Global Counter-terrorism Forum Sahel regional capacity-building working group, which we co-chair. Additionally, we are engaged in capacity-building efforts to fight terrorism through the Trans Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership, which is designed to support partner efforts to contain and marginalize terrorist organizations.

Terrorist operators in the Sahel region, such as Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), continue to concern us. AQIM has demonstrated its ability to carry out criminal activities and attacks against soft targets across significant distances. AQIM has also solidified camps in isolated areas in northern Mali. We are also deeply concerned about violence attributed to Boko Haram.

Sahelian countries are making progress in their counter-terrorism capabilities. Algeria, Mali, Mauritania and Niger have increased pressure on AQIM and developed more effective regional responses to deal with the threat. Additionally, Chad has increased efforts to disrupt AQIM attempts to transit its territory.

We recognize that the Libyan crisis has brought a new set of cross-border challenges relating to security, including increased illicit weapons trafficking, that pose a threat to the stability of the region and must be addressed. We are concerned about the porous nature of the border between Chad, Niger and Libya, and the risk of weapons — including man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) — moving across those borders. Those weapons in the hands of terrorists could further destabilize already fragile areas of the Sahel and surrounding regions.

My Government, in cooperation with the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Canada, France, Italy and Germany, is currently expanding assistance efforts for weapons security, which will help to survey and inventory all known weapons and ammunition storage sites in Libya and destroy MANPADS and other

weapons and munitions, as approved by the Libyan authorities. We urge regional Governments to support the Government of Libya's efforts to identify, secure and destroy loose MANPADS and other light weapons, which are at risk of being smuggled across the Libyan border into the Sahel region. Furthermore, we fully support the efforts of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to engage on this issue, including its critical work with Libyan and other relevant officials on border security.

The report of the assessment mission cites a growing concern regarding the humanitarian and economic impacts the crisis has had on the Sahel region. The impacts are serious and demand the continued attention of the international community. We are interested in hearing ideas for how the United Nations and regional organizations can strengthen their efforts to alleviate these challenges and prevent further humanitarian crises from emerging.

The United States has worked to facilitate the return of African migrants from Libya. Last year we provided more than \$27 million through the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for returnees from Libya. We note that the report recommends support for IOM's continued efforts to assist Governments of the region with the reintegration of their citizens, and we urge Governments to help in this time of need.

Regarding food insecurity, we agree with the report's recommendation that greater steps need to be taken to address the deteriorating food situation in the region in both the short and long terms. UNICEF is warning that more than 1 million children across the Sahel may face severe malnutrition in 2012. We recognize that the return of individuals from Libya into the Sahel only exacerbates the issue. Families now have more mouths to feed in a situation where food security is becoming more problematic and remittances have decreased.

The United States is mobilizing resources to address the food shortfalls. Last year, we provided over \$23 million in humanitarian assistance to affected communities in the Sahel for agriculture and food security, economic recovery and nutrition programmes. In addition, we provide close to \$77 million a year for food assistance, economic recovery and livelihood support in the Sahel. At the end of last year, the United States made an additional \$58 million pledge to the

World Food Programme (WFP) in Chad and a \$7.5 million contribution to WFP in Niger, as well as over \$2 million to Catholic Relief Services in Mali, to meet the emergency food needs of more than half a million people in the region.

We must all keep in mind the potential humanitarian crises that could emerge should the region become destabilized and terrorists able to operate with impunity. My Government is working with the leaders of the Sahel countries to address that challenge through a number of political, social and economic reform efforts, including managing successful democratic transitions and countering terrorism, and we look forward to the Council's continued vigilance on these complex issues.

Mr. Cabral (Portugal): Let me start by thanking Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe for his briefing and for outlining the main aspects of the report of the assessment mission (see S/2012/42). The report is in our opinion a very good basis for a serious reflection on the nature and scope of the problems affecting the Sahel region, as well as on how to ensure multisectoral and integrated responses from the international community.

As the report clearly states, problems in the Sahel pre-date the Libyan crisis and have, for some time now, deserved the attention of the international community. As a clear example of the linkage between security and development, the situation in Libya has not altered the nature of the crisis in the Sahel, even though it has exacerbated existing challenges in States with limited response capacities, mainly through the sudden influx of large numbers of returnees and the proliferation of weapons and ammunition.

Out of its concern over the risk that proliferation of weapons and ammunitions presents to the stability and security of both Libya and the Sahel, the Security Council adopted resolution 2017 (2011), which tasks the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) to submit a report to the Council on the proposals to counter this threat. The report is expected in March.

In resolution 2022 (2011), the Security Council reinforced the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) mandate in this field. We believe that the integrated concept that guided the assessment mission should also apply to these various initiatives

and ensure that they complement each other in the most effective way.

The report identifies a number of national and regional measures that could improve the situation throughout the region and address a number of concerns. Libya is still in a post-revolutionary transition phase. We hope that the stabilization of the country, its economic recovery and regional reintegration will have a positive impact throughout the Sahel.

Therefore, it is essential that the international community and the Council support the Libyan authorities in successfully addressing a number of pressing concerns and challenges. Among those are the adoption of a migration law that also tackles the many issues afflicting African migrant workers in Libya; the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed groups, together with the creation of professional security and military forces; and the establishment of an effective border management system. Another important step would be for Libya to participate in the various regional initiatives dealing with cross-border and transversal problems in the Sahel region.

On the specific case of organized crime and terrorism networks, the report already includes useful data on existing trends. However, we must further develop our understanding of the linkages and overlaps between different forms of organized crime, and between organized crime networks and terrorist groups operating in the region. Are they necessarily juxtaposed? Are there conflicts over resources? How have the recruitment strategies of terrorist groups evolved recently? We believe that these and other questions call for integrated threat analysis, linking concerns related to conflict prevention, State-building and terrorism-prevention efforts.

The United Nations system should, in our opinion, take a more proactive, rather than reactive, approach to extremism and terrorism issues, making a more creative use of existing tools, including the special political missions. We very much endorse the approach chosen to link the various dimensions of the problem and to address the root causes of instability in the Sahel region. Some of those problems require quick responses, as they may potentially expand beyond the region or aggravate an already serious humanitarian and security situation, but others require long-term strategies and instruments.

We think, therefore, that any follow-up to the report should clearly identify which measures may have an immediate effect — for instance, on humanitarian assistance, arms proliferation or border control — and which ones work essentially in the long run, especially those aimed at economic recovery, youth employment and capacity-building. Such measures will help us in understanding how the different types of measures can best be employed and combined to promote sustainable development and security in the region.

The problems identified here are also cross-border and therefore cannot be tackled by national responses alone. We value the efforts of individual countries, but the emphasis should be clearly placed on the development of regional capacities. There are already regional action plans approved by regional organizations — namely, the African Union and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) — which should be put into practice to deal with the problems affecting the Sahel. We should also encourage bilateral and multilateral ad hoc arrangements between Sahel countries for pooling resources of border control and combating terrorism and organized crime. In this respect, we believe that United Nations regional offices — the United Nations Office for West Africa and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa — and the relevant United Nations missions in the region can play a key role in bringing together the relevant actors and promoting concrete initiatives.

Coherence among the various initiatives of international support for the Sahel region should also be among our central concerns. I would mention, in particular, the European Union Strategy for the Sahel, which seeks to link the security and development dimensions through a number of measures that, to a large extent, coincide with those mentioned in the report. Creating mechanisms of coordination that encompass this and other international initiatives would certainly contribute to avoiding duplication and to a more efficient use of international support.

Continued instability in the Sahel has implications that go far beyond the countries most directly affected. Therefore, from the perspective of the United Nations continued involvement in monitoring the situation and the impact of these challenges in the Sahel and in the wider region that stretches from the Atlantic to the Indian Oceans, we look forward to the Council debate on transnational challenges in the Sahel

and the wider West African region, scheduled for February under the Togolese presidency. On our side, Portugal stands ready to continue to contribute to international efforts, here in New York and in other forums in which Portugal participates, aimed at promoting a more collaborative and integrated approach to the challenges faced in the Sahel region.

Mr. Briz Gutiérrez (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Lynn Pascoe for his briefing.

The situation in the Sahel region was of great concern to my delegation even before the impact of the Libyan crisis last year. We therefore welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General to dispatch a mission to the Sahel to assess the impact of the Libyan crisis and the security situation in the Sahel region.

We also welcome the support that the assessment mission received from the countries of the region, particularly the authorities of the five countries visited and from relevant regional organizations, particularly the Economic Community of West African States and United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA). We commend the commitment of the Governments of the countries affected by the Libyan crisis, which are already taking steps to address the security and humanitarian challenges.

The Sahel region has become a corridor in which illegal activities — including drug trafficking, the trafficking of small arms and light weapons, terrorism and transnational organized crime — are on the rise, exacerbating existing socio-economic challenges in a region in which most countries are listed as least developed countries. In addition, the Sahel region is facing extreme drought and flooding as a result of climate change. For all these reasons, my delegation believes that the United Nations should support all efforts to assist the countries in the Sahel that share these cross-border challenges and seriously consider the situation in the Sahel, including the recommendations of the assessment mission.

Regarding the humanitarian situation, Guatemala is concerned that, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 20 million people in the Sahel require humanitarian assistance, particularly in Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad. We believe that early warning systems to prevent a food and nutrition crisis need to be strengthened. It is important that all donor countries

maintain their support for humanitarian activities provided through OCHA, and for the strategy on preparedness for a food crisis in the Sahel, launched by the inter-agency standing committee in Dakar on 15 December 2011.

As to the security situation, we are concerned by the proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms and other weapons, drug trafficking, and the expansion and actions of terrorist groups. Guatemala agrees with the conclusion of the report (see S/2012/42) that most countries in the Sahel region cannot address on their own the threat of transnational organized crime, in particular the activities of such terrorist groups as Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and Boko Haram.

Of course, we support the strengthening of existing security mechanisms and strategies at the regional level. What is new here is not the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, which was already taking place in the region, but the type of weapons that are in circulation now — no longer just small arms but also heavy weapons such as shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles, whose greater destructive power increases the risk to the entire region. The weapons reported to be coming out of Libya are, given the proximity of the borders, circulating throughout the Sahel region and could easily fall into the hands of the criminal and terrorist groups operating in the area.

We deem it urgent to effectively implement Security Council resolution 2017 (2011) and for UNOWA and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to continue their communication and cooperation.

We should also continue to support the countries of the Sahel region in complying with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council aimed at combating terrorism, in particular resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1624 (2005), and implement the United Nations Global Counter-terrorism Strategy, adopted in 2006.

In conclusion, the economic crisis, migration, drug trafficking, arms trafficking, organized crime and terrorism have been exacerbated by the crisis in Libya and could take root in the Sahel region, creating a lethal scenario of insecurity and instability at a time when the region is facing an economic contraction brought on by various factors.

We therefore believe that the Security Council should consider the recommendations of the report of the assessment mission, especially those identified as

of immediate importance, at the national, regional and international levels, and thus contribute to strengthening the capacity of the United Nations system to assist countries of the Sahel region on security issues.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): Like other speakers, I would like to welcome Mr. Pascoe and thank him for his briefing.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his initiative to deploy the United Nations inter-agency assessment mission to the Sahel region, as well as for the comprehensive report (see S/2012/42) that the mission has submitted. We are encouraged by the fact that that initiative was widely appreciated and that the mission found among the civil and political leaders of the region a remarkable openness to engage on the challenges confronting them.

The analysis carried out by the mission with respect to the political, security, humanitarian and socio-economic implications of the crisis in Libya for neighbouring countries are illustrative of the need to strengthen cooperation, including through the development of a common approach to the Sahel region. We agree with the mission's view that any immediate long-term strategy to mitigate the impact of the Libyan crisis should take into account the root causes of the problems in the region. The recommendations of the mission in that regard require serious consideration.

It is commendable that the countries of the region have established a number of national and regional programmes and mechanisms to address the security concerns in the region. At the same time, as the mission concluded, most of the countries in the region cannot overcome threats in isolation. Therefore, the initiatives undertaken by the Governments of the countries affected, as well as the efforts of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States and other relevant organizations, should be supported by the United Nations and the broader international community.

Serious attention should be given to appeals from Sahel countries, which need capacity-building and funds to counter the threats and address the challenges. The destabilizing effects on the region of the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons requires particular consideration, apart from the direct impact on the security situation in the countries of the Sahel.

Nor should we underestimate the risk of the spread of weapons beyond the region, with the potential of their falling into the hands of terrorists and separatists in other parts of the world.

We would also like to support the mission's recommendation on the need for inter-community and inter-religious dialogue, which, in our view, takes on additional importance against the background of the efforts being made towards peace, security and stability in the region.

It is obvious that success will be dependent on greater coherence among all stakeholders. It is therefore important and commendable that, in spite of the varied regional membership, all of the countries are willing to work in a more coordinated manner.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to thank Mr. Lynn Pascoe for his detailed and, as usual, very clear briefing.

This first Council debate on such a sensitive area as the Sahel is very important to the stability and security of a number of African subregions. It is very timely, given the alarming events that have taken place recently in the Sahelo-Sahara region. The analyses and recommendations contained in the report (see S/2012/42) presented by the Under-Secretary-General outline key modalities for supporting national, regional and international efforts aimed at finding sustainable solutions to the many challenges facing that area.

Given that it is located both in the Maghreb and in the Sahelo-Sahara region, Morocco is naturally directly concerned by the threats emanating from the Sahel region and is therefore following very closely the developments in that part of our continent.

The up-tick in the number of attacks and kidnappings carried out by Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, the increase in the number of terrorist attacks perpetrated by Boko Haram, the re-emergence of old rebel movements, the proliferation of all types of weapons and trafficking of all kinds all are sources of concern on which all the States of the region and the rest of the international community must seriously focus.

The security challenges emanating from the Sahelo-Sahara region are not new. For several years now, that region has been facing an unprecedented resurgence in the activities of transnational organized crime networks and terrorist groups.

More recently, the major transatlantic drug-trafficking networks have gradually transformed the Gulf of Guinea and West Africa into a transit and redistribution area, from which hard drugs are shipped through certain Sahel countries, destined for Europe and for countries in the Maghreb countries and the Middle East. The dangerous developments in the Sahelo-Sahara region are the result of the confluence of many interlinked structural and cyclical factors.

The situation is the result of the difficulties faced by the States of the region in securing their borders and of the increased poverty in certain areas of the Sahara, which provides an incentive to resort to criminal activities for survival purposes. That combination of factors has enabled rebel armed groups, secessionist movements and many transnational organized crime networks and terrorist groups, including Al-Qaida, in the Islamic Maghreb, to take up residence there and create grey areas.

The situation was recently exacerbated by the Libyan crisis, whose effects continue to be felt in many Sahelo-Saharan countries in terms of security but also, and especially, at the humanitarian and socio-economic levels.

A number of commendable initiatives at the national, bilateral and regional levels were undertaken with a view to providing solutions to the challenges in the Sahel well before the Libyan crisis. Unfortunately, those initiatives have not enabled us to date to address the problem in a holistic, inclusive and coordinated manner.

The time has come for enhanced regional cooperation on the part of all States in the region. We hope that the international community, led by the United Nations, will devote greater attention to the situation by providing solutions to the structural problems relating to secessionist armed movements or groups, which perpetuate the existence of the grey zones, thereby facilitating the proliferation of terrorist and criminal activities.

United Nations bodies and agencies in the region have a key role to play in building the capacities of States of the region to combat terrorism and transnational organized crime.

Given the alarming facts linked to the proliferation of weapons, it is clear that regional cooperation is necessary among the countries of North

Africa and between that subregion and West Africa. Moreover, the strengthening ties among transnational organized crime networks, in particular, drug networks coming from the Atlantic Ocean and armed or terrorist groups in the Sahel, are a serious threat to international stability and security.

The international community should also give special attention to the humanitarian and socio-economic challenges facing the States of the Sahel, in particular owing to recurring food security problems and in the light of the recent return of migrant workers from Libya to their country of origin.

My country supports the recommendation in the report of the assessment mission that the United Nations should develop an integrated strategy that addresses the security, humanitarian and development challenges in the Sahel region in a consistent and comprehensive way in the medium and long term. My country fully supports the idea of creating a regional cooperation platform for the Sahel region, as set out in the report. That cooperation mechanism should be transregional in nature and scope, involving all countries of the Arab Maghreb and the Sahel, as well as any other relevant country of West or Central Africa, with the cooperation of the United Nations and international partners.

Finally, my delegation fully supports the draft press statement proposed by France on this issue.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): The Togolese delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his timely initiative to dispatch an assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region. It welcomes the report (S/2012/42) of the mission that Mr. Lynn Pascoe has just presented. The inter-agency composition of the mission demonstrates the importance that the United Nations attaches to the topic under consideration in the context of regional and international peace and security.

Over the past two decades, the once stable Sahel region has become an area where insecurity is rife owing to acts of terrorism and trafficking in drugs, weapons, goods and humans — in short, all the elements of organized crime. Since the region borders West Africa, the scourge has rapidly spread there. While the leaders of the region took bold measures to combat that scourge, the Libyan crisis arose and exacerbated the situation. The true impact of that crisis has been clearly established by the assessment team,

since it identified several sectors that have suffered, such as the political, security, humanitarian and development spheres. In short, all the foundations of the State have been affected.

In addition to the foregoing issues are the already chronic and recurrent problems of the region, such as drought, famine and malnutrition. The Libyan crisis has therefore exacerbated the region's problems. The return of migrant workers to their countries and provinces of origin completely impoverished, people fleeing the fighting, refugees in neighbouring countries and the freer movement of all types of weapons in the region are new challenges now facing the Sahel countries and the entire region.

One such challenge remaining is the population growth of countries, which has a direct consequence on housing, schooling and the availability of farmland. To that, one can add the terrorist acts of the Organization of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and Boko Haram, as well as increased transnational organized crime. Together, those challenges put political pressure on Governments and have a direct and dangerous impact on the peace, security and stability in the countries concerned.

In the view of the delegation of Togo, all those issues require prompt action to prevent the Sahel region from sinking into complete insecurity, which would be very damaging to its development. In that regard, the recommendations made by the assessment team to prevent the spread of conflicts, the destabilization of States and worsening humanitarian problems deserve close attention. In that regard, the international community should provide economic and financial support to the countries of the region and help them to develop economic and social reintegration programmes.

It is generally recognized that when States face serious insecurity issues, respect for human rights takes second place. The efforts of the United Nations should also address the human rights component and urge Governments to fully respect such rights in combating insecurity and terrorism.

The States of the region are making great individual efforts to deal with the situation. Strengthening the capacity of security personnel, increasing border controls and other targeted measures are part of that committed struggle. However, Togo believes that regional and international cooperation should be one of the effective tools for combating the

situation. The ease with which criminals and other highway bandits communicate and move from one country to another requires the establishment of multifaceted cooperation in order to make it possible for the various initiatives undertaken to achieve the anticipated goals.

To that end, my country welcomes the ongoing cooperation among the Economic Community of West African States, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa in the context of combating those new threats to peace and security in the region.

By acting together, the international community can overcome organized crime in the Sahel. Togo firmly believes that the Security Council should play a decisive role to that end in the coming months. Togo also supports the draft press statement that the French delegation has proposed to the Council.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of South Africa.

We wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Mr. Pascoe for his briefing statement on the report of the inter-agency assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan conflict and how it has been handled in the neighbouring Sahel region (see S/2012/42).

The report confirms South Africa's long-held view that the manner in which resolution 1973 (2011) was implemented in the Libyan conflict was going to have dire consequences for the countries in the region. South Africa is deeply concerned that the proliferation of lethal arms in Libya, and in the Sahel in general, will no doubt take a long time to address in a comprehensive manner. There is no denying the fact that the region has for some time had its own challenges, but the manner in which the outbreak of the conflict in Libya was approached further compounded the problems of the region.

Of further concern to South Africa is the increase in criminal and terrorist activities in the region, as evidenced in the recent concentration of terrorist groups and extremists in the region. The amassing of arms and ammunition is a real concern in that regard and the heightened activities of groups such as Boko Haram are further testament to that.

What started as a conflict in one country has now spilled over to become a regional problem with unprecedented consequences. The international

community should therefore take responsibility and not leave the people and Governments of the region to deal with these challenges, including the scourge of terrorism, alone.

We support the recommendations for a multi-pronged approach to the problems at the national, regional and international levels, in particular regarding the need for close cooperation and collaboration between the United Nations and the African Union (AU). This would be a practical application of cooperation and coordination envisaged under resolution 2033 (2012), which was adopted recently by the Council.

It is unfortunate that the zeal of some members of the international community to resolve the Libyan crisis militarily ignored our warning of consequences too dire to contemplate, which have now placed that region and Africa in their current quagmire. We should avoid easy answers and claiming that the Sahel has always faced such challenges, when in actual fact it is well known that they were not previously of this magnitude.

It is clear from the report that the joint collaborative efforts of the United Nations and the AU were well received by the leadership and peoples of the countries visited by the assessment mission. South Africa has repeatedly emphasized the need for a strategic political process to resolve the crisis in Libya and beyond that would include the central role of the AU. The report shows that clear political will exists among the States of the subregion to find common solutions to their common problems.

Looking forward, we would urge the United Nations system to address these challenges in a coherent and integrated manner, working in partnership with these countries in accordance with their national and subregional structures. The international community, through the coordination provided by the United Nations system, has an important role to play in facilitating support and technical assistance in the various areas identified in the report. These systemic interventions, managed in an integrated and coherent manner, will constitute an investment in the long-term stability of the subregion.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I call on the representative of Niger.

Mr. Boureima (Niger) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you most warmly, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for January. I also wish to thank you for having organized today's briefing on the long-awaited report of the assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region (S/2012/42).

I also wish to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for having yet again demonstrated the special interest he takes in Africa as a whole, and the Sahel region in particular. Furthermore, we thank Mr. Lynn Pascoe for his excellent briefing.

We believe that the assessment team is to be truly commended. Indeed, its report clearly identifies not only the problems that have been caused or exacerbated in the Sahel region by the Libyan crisis, but also the appropriate measures for addressing them. The mission has also made some relevant recommendations to the national authorities of the region and to the international community as a whole. The mission, while noting national and regional efforts, nevertheless stresses the need for significant international support in order to achieve positive results in mitigating the effects of the Libyan crisis on the region and in combating the rampant scourges there.

It has been recognized since the 2005 World Summit that there is a link between development and security, and we therefore need a comprehensive and integrated approach to meeting these challenges, in particular in the Sahel region, which suffers problems of such scope and origins that the international community is compelled to dedicate the resources — in particular, the financial resources — necessary to resolving them. At the same time, while recognizing the efforts of many of our partners, we truly hope for more solidarity and commitment on the part of all.

Niger is doing its utmost at the international and regional levels. For instance, on 22 and 23 January we held an international forum on security and development in the Sahelo-Saharan region of Niger in order to raise awareness of our security and development strategy there. The strategy is accompanied by a budget, with which we call on the international community to assist.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Mali.

Mr. Daou (Mali) (*spoke in French*): Like my colleague and friend from Niger, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your outstanding presidency of the Council, and to express my delegation's pleasure at taking part in this meeting.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his initiative to deploy to the countries of the Sahel an inter-agency assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the region. My country greatly appreciates the sustained attention that he devotes to the Sahara-Sahel region, which has for some time experienced a security situation that is both complex and worrisome.

Mali, which was one of the countries that hosted the United Nations mission, takes note of the report (see S/2012/42) that has just been introduced by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. We also take note of the recommendations made by the assessment mission aimed at supporting national, regional and international initiatives. Nevertheless, allow me to make some additional comments.

I would like first to underscore that the report repeats erroneous statements made by insignificant individuals and small groups who have scorned the spirit of openness and dialogue espoused by Mali's highest officials and opted for violence as a way to pursue their claims. Mali is an old nation and a land of hospitality, dialogue and tolerance. Mali is also a country that respects cultural diversity, democratic principles and individual and collective rights and freedoms. However, the Government of Mali will tolerate no act aimed at eroding the unity and integrity of its national territory.

As clearly underscored by the report, the Libyan crisis has had serious repercussions on neighbouring countries, especially those of the Sahel region, including Mali, which has had to face huge numbers of returning indigent migrants and heavily armed former combatants.

It goes without saying that the presence of armed groups serves to fuel old ambitions, just as the spread of weapons and munitions of all sorts have exacerbated insecurity and severely tested peace, stability and security in the Sahara-Sahel strip.

Mali is fully aware of the scope and complexity of the current challenges. We remain convinced that responding to them entails not just strengthening the

military presence in the affected regions in order to combat terrorism, cross-border crime and all manner of trafficking, but also protecting people and their property, improving basic infrastructure and public services and promoting development efforts at the local level. The many initiatives put in place by the Government are a response to that. Those include the special programme for peace, security and development in northern Mali and the shared governance programme for peace and security in Mali.

At the regional level, we should welcome the fruitful cooperation that exists between the countries concerned. I would like to underscore that it is they that have the primary responsibility to ensure peace, stability and security in the Sahel.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight here the urgent need for the United Nations and the African Union to help mobilize increased international assistance for affected countries of the Sahel in order that they can strengthen their capacities to overcome the current challenges.

The President. I now give the floor to the representative of Chad.

Mr. Tchingonbe Patchanne (Chad) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time that my country takes the floor, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a happy new year, Mr. President, as well as to all our colleagues here. I also wish to commend the efforts made by the team of experts that carried out an assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the countries of the Sahel region.

As the Council is aware, thanks to its huge oil resources, before the crisis Libya was a country that drew migrant workers of various nationalities. My

country, Chad, is one of the countries of the Sahel region with a large number of its nationals living in Libya. Today, more than 80 per cent of them have been able to return to their country thanks to the support of the International Organization for Migration, which I would like to thank for its dedication to humanitarian concerns.

Chad attaches great interest to the conclusions and recommendations of the mission, and we welcome the fact that the Secretary-General decided to establish it. We would also like the Council to devote to the report all the attention it deserves, so as to prompt the international community to lend its support to the countries of the Sahel region in order that they can win the war against underdevelopment, famine, poverty and insecurity.

With regard to the circulation of weaponry in the Sahel region and the threat it poses to its countries, His Excellency President Idriss Deby Itno sounded the alarm even before the fall of the Al-Qadhafi regime. Nevertheless, the situation continues to be one of concern given the long border separating our two countries, over which it is difficult to exercise control.

All those challenges that the countries of the region must face are made worse by the impact of the Libyan crisis.

The President. I would like once again to thank Mr. Lynn Pascoe for his briefing to the Council today.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.



Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6710th meeting

Tuesday, 31 January 2012, 3 p.m.
New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Sangqu	(South Africa)
<i>Members:</i>	Azerbaijan	Mr. Musayev
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Juppé
	Germany	Mr. Link
	Guatemala	Mr. Caballeros
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Amrani
	Pakistan	Mr. Haroon
	Portugal	Mr. Portas
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hague
	United States of America	Mrs. Rodham Clinton

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 24 January 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2012/71)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 24 January 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2012/71)

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Qatar and the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, Chairman of the current session of the Arab League Council at the Ministerial Level, and request the Protocol Officer to escort him to his seat at the Council table.

Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, Chairman of the current session of the Arab League Council at the Ministerial Level, was escorted to a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Nabil Elaraby, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, to participate in this meeting.

I wish to welcome the presence at today's meeting of the Ministers and the Deputy Secretary-General. Their presence is an affirmation of the importance of the subject matter to be addressed.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/71, which contains a letter dated 24 January 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, Chairman of the current session of the Arab League Council at the Ministerial Level.

Sheikh Al-Thani (Qatar) (spoke in Arabic): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I thank you and the members of the Council for convening this meeting to allow us to report on the mission with which we were entrusted.

At a meeting held in Cairo on 22 January, the Council of Ministers of the League of Arab States adopted a resolution requesting that I, in my capacity as Chairman of the Arab Ministerial Committee on Syria, and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States brief the Security Council on the plan adopted under that resolution and that we request the Council to endorse the plan.

I wish to stress that our first and ultimate goal is to serve the interests of Syria, which entails protecting its sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity and ensuring its stability. I further stress the importance of ensuring the solidarity and unity of the Syrian people, harmony among its various components, and the protection of all its ethnic, religious and social groups. With its unique social fabric and intellectual and cultural authenticity, Syria is dear to the hearts of all Arabs. I address the Council today to brief it on the resolution adopted by an organization representing all Arabs.

We meet today under the watchful eyes of bereaved orphans, widows, thousands of wounded, detainees, displaced children, young people, the elderly and women who continue to hope for the support of the Security Council and thus to live a decent, free life based on right, justice and good governance. It is up to the Security Council and its responsibility under United Nations Charter to realize the hopes of the Syrian people. Indeed, we are entrusted with such a burden by virtue of our humanitarian responsibility.

At the League of Arab States, we have worked diligently, patiently and responsibly to find solutions that will help us settle the Syrian crisis peacefully. On 27 August 2011, the League of Arab States adopted an initiative to end the violence in Syria, launch an inclusive national dialogue with the opposition to prevent the situation from deteriorating further, and introduce reforms in a secure and controlled environment. The provisions and mechanisms of the initiative were balanced, transparent and objective. It was the only way to achieve a peaceful settlement of the crisis based on the aforementioned goals.

On 26 October 2011, at its extraordinary session in Cairo, the League of Arab States reiterated the Arab position in a resolution calling for an immediate and complete end to the violence and killing, the elimination of armed elements, and the rejection of a security-based solution in a bid to avoid further casualties and exacerbating the conflict among the various factions of the Syrian people, preserve the civil peace, protect civilians, and maintain the unity of the Syrian people.

The resolution called on the Council of Ministers of the League of Arab States to establish, at that session, an Arab Ministerial Committee — under my chairmanship and with the Foreign Ministers of Algeria, Egypt, the Sudan and Oman and the head of the Arab League as members — mandated to liaise with the Syrian leadership in an effort to halt all acts of violence and killing. The Committee requested the Sudan and Egypt to persuade the Syrian leadership to withdraw all military presences and launch a dialogue between the Syrian people and opposition in order to implement political reforms that would meet the aspirations of the people. The resolution also called for the establishment of necessary contacts with the Syrian Government and opposition in order to prepare for a conference of inclusive national dialogue at the headquarters of the League of Arab States and under its auspices that would realize the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.

On 26 October 2011, the Ministerial Committee held discussions in Damascus with President Bashar Al-Assad. In a meeting held with the Syrian side in Doha on 30 October 2011, the Committee agreed on a plan of action that was welcomed at the resumed extraordinary session of the League of Arab States, held at the ministerial level at the League's headquarters on 2 November 2011. The agreement was annexed to the resolution. The plan confirmed the official Syrian approval of the following: first, to end all acts of violence committed by all sources in order to protect the lives of Syrian citizens; secondly, to free detainees held as a result of the current events; thirdly, to withdraw all military elements from the cities and residential neighbourhoods; and fourthly, to provide the relevant agencies of the League of Arab States and Arab and international media free access throughout Syria in order to report on developments there and monitor the situation. The plan called on the Ministerial Committee to conduct, in parallel with

concrete progress made by the Syrian Government towards meeting its commitments, necessary contacts and consultations with the Government and various factions of the Syrian opposition with a view to convening a national dialogue conference within two weeks of the date of the adoption of the resolution.

Unfortunately, the Syrian Government did not fully or immediately meet its commitments to the League's initiative of 2 November 2011. Consequently, the Ministerial Council decided on 12 November 2011 to adopt a host of measures, including the imposition of economic and political sanctions on the Syrian Government and calling on all opposition factions to meet in Cairo for three days to agree at a forthcoming conference on a transitional phase for Syria.

After the idea of dispatching an Arab observer mission to Syria took shape — not to give any party an opportunity to buy time but rather to stop the violence and the bloodshed — the Ministerial Council approved, at a meeting held in Rabat on 16 November 2011, a draft protocol on the legal status of the mission, whose mandate was to verify the implementation of the Arab plan in order to solve the crisis and protect civilians. Should the Syrian Government fail to sign the protocol or violate any of its provisions — including those calling for an end to the violence and killing and the release of detainees — the resolution called for convening the Economic and Social Council of the League of Arab States to consider imposing economic sanctions on Syria.

The resolution was communicated to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and requested him to take necessary action in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations to support the League's efforts. On 27 November 2011, the Ministerial Council adopted a package of sanctions, including halting flights to Syria, that would not directly affect the Syrian people. At a meeting held in Doha on 3 December 2011, the Ministerial Committee agreed on the details of the sanctions and relevant action. It is worth mentioning that the Arab Ministerial Committee continued its meetings aimed at following up on developments in the Syrian situation; it met in Doha on 17 December 2011 and in Cairo on 8 January 2012.

Despite all those efforts, including contacts with the Syrian Government, the Syrian side resorted to introducing one amendment after the other to the draft protocol, and asking all kinds of questions, to which

the League of Arab States provided answers and clarifications, for more than a month. It was clear that the Syrian objective was to stall and prevaricate in order to avoid taking the responsibility of implementing its commitments, which reflected the Syrian Government's lack of political will to sign the protocol and commit to implementing the provisions of the Arab plan.

Once the fear barrier came down and the people started defending themselves in the face of military and security oppression, the Syrian Government signed the protocol on 19 December 2011. Immediately thereafter, the Arab observer mission — the first of its kind in the history of the League of Arab States — was deployed. It is not unlikely that the purpose behind the Syrian Government's signing the protocol is to enforce the military solution under cover of its commitment to the protocol. In fact, the Syrian Government has failed to implement major provisions of the protocol, notably those related to the immediate implementation of the Arab plan of action that it had agreed to.

In briefing the Council on the Arab efforts, I wish to take fully into account the Council's continuing follow-up of developments in the Syrian crisis, so that the Council will understand the reasons that prompted the Arab States to adopt their resolution, which we have been entrusted to convey to the Council.

At the last meeting of the Arab Ministerial Committee in Cairo on 22 January, a comprehensive review was conducted of the tasks accomplished by the observer mission based on its findings. That meeting adopted unanimously a resolution that included a unanimously endorsed initiative on an integrated plan for a peaceful settlement of the Syrian crisis that would be acceptable to and implemented by all parties in good faith and without stalling or reluctance. That resolution has been circulated among the members of the Security Council.

The plan constitutes a road map that is consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and is aimed at a rational, democratic, political solution to the crisis and a peaceful transition of power. It provides for the formation of a national unity Government within two months, to be chaired by a mutually agreed figure and to include members of the opposition. One of its tasks would be to prepare for free and pluralistic parliamentary and presidential elections, under a law stipulating the conduct of such elections under Arab and international supervision. The resolution extended

the Arab observer mission mandate by one month despite the fact that the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States announced on 28 January the suspension of the activities of the observer mission, pending review of the matter by the League's Council of Ministers, given the serious deterioration of the security situation as a result of the escalation of the security-based option.

The League of Arab States began to discuss the Syrian crisis six months after it started. We have come before the Council today after five additional months of effort to push the Syrian Government to find a solution to the crisis with its own people, based on the resolutions of the League. Throughout our efforts, we have been eager to preserve the unity and stability of Syria as an important member of the Arab family.

Our efforts and initiatives, however, have been completely in vain, for the Syrian Government has regrettably failed to make any sincere effort to cooperate with us. It is unfortunate that its only effort towards a solution have been to kill its own people. The reality on the ground bears witness to the fact that the bloodshed has not stopped, that the killing machine is still at work and that violence has continued to spread everywhere. That approach was clearly articulated in the declarations made by the Syrian Minister for Foreign Affairs at the press conference of 24 January. After mocking the League of Arab States' plan as an invitation to internationalization, he confirmed the Syrian Government's rejection of the Arab solution and declared that the security-based solution was a necessity imposed by the situation on the ground.

The important question at this stage is: What is the solution for a people that is being slaughtered? The Syrian Government invokes the violence committed by armed groups as justification. Could it not be that the people are defending themselves after months of killing, detention and torture? Could any leadership continue its rule against the desire of its own people who are calling for reform? We must not forget that the crisis we are discussing was launched through spontaneous, peaceful demonstrations by unarmed citizens calling for rights that are enshrined in international covenants and instruments. Those demonstrators have faced live ammunition, heavy weaponry, widespread detention and flagrant violations of their human rights.

The Syrian regime is promoting the idea of a hidden agenda harboured by certain States against it. That idea is untrue and belies the position of the international community concerning the events in Syria resulting from the Government's policy. Many thousands of people have died and many detainees languish in prisons. The Government killing machine continues effectively unabated. Sadly, funeral processions have become scenes of massacres; schools have been transformed into military headquarters and even houses of worship have not been spared from the shelling. Clearly such oppression has reached unimaginable proportions when the throats of slogan chanters have been slashed, as the killers of Ibrahim Qaqoush did in Hama. Fingers of pro-freedom cartoonists have been broken, the fate of Ali Farzat in Damascus is a case in point.

The Council may well be aware of the adoption by the Human Rights Council of three resolutions at its sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth sessions, strongly condemning Syria for the flagrant and systematic violations committed by Syrian forces that may be considered crimes against humanity.

In its resolution 66/176 of 19 December 2011, the General Assembly condemned strongly and by a vast majority the continuation by the Syrian authorities of their serious and systematic violations of human rights. The Secretary-General requested the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities and to adopt a unified position with regard to the crisis. As for the rate of killing taking place in Syria, the United Nations declared that it was no longer able to keep count of the thousands of victims and would consequently stop doing so. A few days ago, UNICEF confirmed that the death toll of children killed in Syria exceeded 384.

I do not believe that anyone would accept such a number even if it were described as collateral damage. I do not believe that any one of those children was a member of an armed terrorist group. The Council may well recall that human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have condemned the acts of oppression committed by the Syrian regime against civilians and called for the International Criminal Court to investigate the perpetrated crimes. The International Commission of Inquiry cited in its report issued in Geneva on 28 November 2011 that the Syrian security forces had committed crimes against humanity. It reported extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, enforced

disappearances and acts of torture, some of which had been carried out in conjunction with acts of sexual violence.

The Security Council has taken landmark positions in supporting us, both at the national level in our attempt to find solutions to the problems of Darfur, Lebanon and the conflict between Eritrea and Djibouti, or at the level of the League of Arab States with relation to the war of Lebanon and the war in the Gaza Strip. We look forward, in the same spirit, to the Council's taking a positive stance by supporting the Arab position on the Syrian crisis.

Allow me to recall that in the past, I came before the Council with a solution to the Lebanese crisis that did justice to the occupied Lebanese territories. Subsequently, in Doha we embarked on the Lebanese reconciliation that with which all here are quite familiar. Today, the League of Arab States comes before the Council to request that it assume its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations to address the humanitarian tragedy unfolding in Syria by adopting a clear resolution that supports the latest Arab initiative endorsed in the resolution of the League of Arab States Ministerial Council in Cairo on 22 January, to which I referred earlier. We also call on the Council to undertake all measures based on the resolutions of the League of Arab States, specifically economic resolutions and bans on travel to Syria. We are not calling for military intervention; we are advocating the adoption of concrete economic pressure to bring the Syrian regime to understand that it cannot avoid meeting the demands of its people. We are not after a regime change, because this is a matter that we believe the Syrian people should decide.

The continuation of the current situation is a threat to the entire region and might lead to grave repercussions if we do not remedy it in a serious and effective manner. We at the League of Arab States have made sincere efforts to find a solution to the crisis and hoped that the Syrian regime would be wise enough to realize that its approach to governance has become obsolete.

Consequently, and since the Syrian regime has continued to use an approach that flies in the face of today's logic and that of the international community, we cannot but resort to the rational solution to the crisis that is set out in the plan that we have presented to the Council. We hope that it will gain the Council's

support. Only through this can we hope to do justice to the aspirations of the Syrian people, their aspirations for freedom and for the establishment of good governance.

We call on the Council to adopt the draft resolution sponsored by the brotherly Kingdom of Morocco. Otherwise, we will be sending a wrong message to the Syrian regime, one that encourages it to continue oppressing its people. That might have serious consequences for peace, stability and security in Syria and the entire region.

The President: I thank His Excellency Minister Al-Thani for his briefing.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Nabil Elaraby, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

Mr. Elaraby (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, Sir, to thank you and the members of the Security Council for your invitation to participate in this important meeting.

The Security Council convenes today at a time when events in Syria are spiralling dangerously. This requires that international efforts be concerted with Arab efforts for a rapid, effective and decisive action, first to ensure immediate cessation of violence in order to protect the fraternal Syrian people, and secondly to begin, as soon as possible, the implementation of the road map for a peaceful political solution that rids Syria of its grinding crisis and achieves the aspirations of the Syrian people for change and reform — a move to a peaceful democratic life in which all segments of the Syrian people enjoy dignity and freedom, as called for by every Arab country.

The security situation is increasingly grave and urgent in light of the escalation that Syria has witnessed in the past few days — the ongoing acts of violence, the shelling and firing and counter-shelling and counter-firing that have felled many innocent civilians in the Syrian Government's clear resort to an escalation of the so-called security option, in complete contradiction of the commitments it took on in the Arab plan of action as well as in the protocol signed by the Syrian Arab Republic and the League of Arab States on 19 December 2011, on the mandate of the League's observer mission in Syria.

We therefore believe that the first priority now is for the Security Council to adopt a resolution demanding that all parties — I repeat, all parties — immediately

cease firing, protect Syrians and support the Arab plan of action for a peaceful political settlement of the crisis.

Today's meeting has been convened in implementation of subparagraph 3 of Article 52 of the Charter of the United Nations:

(*spoke in English*)

"The Security Council shall encourage the development of pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements or by such regional agencies either on the initiative of the states concerned or by reference from the Security Council."

(*spoke in Arabic*)

It is in that very context that the League of Arab States has come to the Security Council.

I should like to thank the Council for having so quickly responded to the request from the League of Arab States to inform this Council on the outlines of the Arab démarche. The issue has been set out in detail by His Excellency the Prime Minister of Qatar. I shall repeat some points but will attempt to be brief.

The latest decision by the League was on 22 January, on a road map for a peaceful settlement of the Syrian crisis. Before taking up the details of our initiative, I should like to stress some of the fundamental principles of the Arab démarche.

First, the fundamental objective of our initiative is an immediate cessation of all acts of violence against and killing of Syrian civilians, as well as the realization of the aspirations and demands of the Syrian people — demands for economic, social and political change, a move towards a correct political life in true democracy in which all fundamental rights and the rule of law are maintained, and a peaceful alternation of power.

Secondly, Arab States aim at taking up the Syrian crisis in an Arab context. We are attempting to avoid any foreign intervention, particularly military intervention. Thirdly, the Arab endeavour proceeds from the need for a peaceful political settlement and, as I have stated, a rejection of any military or foreign intervention. Fourthly, all the resolutions of the League of Arab States — all the League's resolutions — have always stressed full respect of the security, sovereignty, territorial integrity of Syria and unity of the Syrian people.

Our objective is therefore for the Security Council to support our initiative, not to take its place. The Arab plan is the fundamental mechanism for a peaceful settlement of the Syrian crisis, with international support and agreement from the Security Council.

In our approach to the Syrian crisis, we have taken up two fundamental pillars.

One is immediate action for an immediate, full cessation of all acts of violence against and killing of the Syrian people, while at the same time maintaining the right of the Syrian people to expression by peaceful demonstration and for the Syrian security forces not to confront the demonstrations.

The second pillar is a road map leading to a peaceful political settlement of the crisis through a national dialogue that includes all parties, all sects, all political currents and all segments of Syrian society in order to realize the aspirations of the Syrian people for a life of true democracy.

In fulfilling that endeavour, since July 2011 the League has taken several actions and has put a number of initiatives to the Syrian leadership. The most important was on 27 August. Mandated by the Council of the League, I personally handed it to the Syrian leadership on 10 September last year. Thereafter, an Arab ministerial committee — again, mandated by the Council of the League and chaired by the Prime Minister of Qatar — visited Damascus and met with the Syrian leadership on 26 October.

Based on that initiative and those contacts, the Arab action plan took shape. The Syrian Government promised to implement it, and it was then adopted by the Council of the Arab League on 2 November. The plan includes:

“First, the Syrian Government is to put an end to all acts of violence, from whatever source, to protect the Syrian citizens; second, the release of those detained during, and because of, the current events; three, withdrawal of all armed elements from all cities and urban centres; and four, opening the door to all institutions of the League as well as Arab and international media to move freely in Syria in order to ascertain facts on the ground and monitor such events.

“Secondly, with concrete progress in the Syrian Government’s implementation of its commitments, the Arab Ministerial Committee on

Syria would make the necessary contacts and hold the necessary consultations with the Government and all parties of the Syrian opposition in order to hold a national dialogue within two weeks of that date.”

In order to verify the Syrian Government’s implementation of its commitments under the action plan, on 19 December 2011 the Arab League drew up a protocol establishing the legal context for the observer mission. Observers from all Arab States and relevant institutions were deployed beginning on 24 December 2011. The mission continued to deploy to all areas where demonstrations were occurring in 15 cities in Syria.

The head of the mission presented his first technical field report covering the period from 24 December 2011, the date on which the team reached Damascus, to 18 January of this year. The report was transmitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 22 January in order to inform him of the situation on the ground and the cooperation and consultations between our two organizations.

The Council of the League of Arab States decided that, in the light of the conclusions presented in the report, partial progress had indeed been made in implementing some of the commitments undertaken by the Syrian Government. However, progress was incomplete and therefore insufficient. It was not what was required or, indeed, what was wanted.

The resolutions of the League and the protocol itself refer to the immediate and complete cessation of acts of violence, the release of all detainees, the withdrawal of all armed elements from cities and the provision of unhindered access to Arab and international media. In that context, I should like to take up some fundamental points presented in the report in order to provide the appropriate temporal and political context.

First, the Syrian Government should have met all of its commitments before the monitors arrived, so that the mission would merely verify implementation. However, since it did not fully meet all its commitments, the task of the team on the ground had to change. The team sought to demand that the Syrian Government immediately and fully implement its commitments. It also sought to confront some painful humanitarian situations that could not be ignored, even though they exceeded the scope of the team’s mandate. By way of example, the team delivered food to some

areas, recorded witness accounts of human rights violations committed against Syrian citizens, and assisted in the exchange of the bodies of the fallen.

Secondly, the report covers a limited and brief time frame. It does not address events during the nine months preceding the team's arrival in Syria, between 15 March and 24 December 2011. During that period, many events occurred, as did many violations that the team did not address as they lay outside its remit. That was not required of the mission. That must always be taken into consideration when assessing the work and findings of the observers.

Thirdly, the mission's task was very specific and, indeed, very complicated. As the Prime Minister of Qatar stated, never in the past had a team of civilian observers been dispatched to a State facing escalating protests by civilians calling for regime change. The mission was deployed to verify that the Syrian Government was fulfilling its commitments to end the violence and killing and to withdraw armed elements from cities and urban centres at a time when the political, military and security forces of that country were in control.

It must be clearly stated that the mandate of the mission was to verify the Syrian Government's implementation of its commitments, and not — I repeat, not — to bring about disengagement or a truce between warring parties, which is usually the case when monitors or missions are dispatched by the United Nations to any conflict area in the world.

Fourthly, the most important fact in the mission's report is the reference to the excessive use of force by the Syrian security forces since last March, which sparked a reaction from protestors and opposition elements. Paragraphs 71 and 74 of the report refer to the state of severe tension, injustice and repression to which Syrian citizens were being subjected. The opposition had taken to bearing arms as a result of the excessive force deployed by Government forces since last March. That is taken directly from the report.

Fifthly, although the presence of observers on the ground did not lead the Syrian Government to fully and immediately keep its promises, it nevertheless had some positive effects. For example, the Syrian people have been given greater freedom to express their demands, as was clearly evidenced by the increased number of protestors in many cities following the mission's arrival. Many Syrians found a mechanism by

which to directly express their own experience and positions through witness accounts, which they provided directly to the members of the mission. The mission was able to monitor and record substantial information regarding the human rights situation in Syria. The mission was able to obtain lengthy lists of detainees and missing persons through extensive contact with the people in direct meetings and on the websites created by the League of Arab States for that purpose.

In view of the conclusions presented in the mission's report, having studied developments on the ground in Syria since the League began to address the crisis — and with a view to complementing the efforts to resolve the Syrian crisis without resort to foreign intervention or lapsing into civil war and in respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria, and the partial progress that was achieved by the mission — on 22 January the Council of the League, meeting at the ministerial level, adopted a resolution in which it stressed several points.

The Council of Ministers underscored the need for an end to all acts of violence and killing from all quarters so as to protect Syrian citizens. It also called on the Syrian Government to release all detainees, withdraw all armed elements from the cities and residential areas, and grant access to the relevant League agencies and Arab and international media. It highlighted the need to recall the Syrian Army and any armed forces of whatever formation to their barracks and original locations; to ensure the right to all forms of peaceful demonstration and not to confront protestors; and to facilitate the mission's work and the entry of equipment, in particular communications equipment. The mission called on the Syrian Government and all parties of the Syrian opposition to enter into a genuine political dialogue under the auspices of the League of Arab States within two weeks of the issuance of that resolution in order to implement a series of initiatives.

The first initiative is the formation of a national unity Government within two months of the dialogue, with the participation of the current Government and opposition under an agreed leader. Its task should be to implement the provisions of the Arab plan of action and prepare for free, multiparty parliamentary and presidential elections, in accordance with a law specifying the procedure under Arab and international supervision and authorizing the Vice-President to negotiate and cooperate with a unity Government to

facilitate the transitional period. I should like to stress that the road map adopted on 22 January can in no way be interpreted as calling on the Syrian President to renounce power.

There is a precedent. I visited Damascus on 13 July last year and talked with the President of the Republic on the need for true political reform. The President said that he would entrust Mr. Farouk Al-Shara, his first Vice-President, who is responsible for the necessary fundamental reforms and that he would inform me of those political reforms. That is similar to the current demand of the League of Arab States.

Once formed, the national unity Government would state that its aim is to establish a democratic and multiparty political system that ensures the equality of all citizens irrespective of their affiliation or sectarian or religious identity, as well as the handover of power. The national Government should restore security and stability to the country, and reorganize the police force so that it can perform security functions of a civilian nature, with Arab States undertaking to fund such efforts in coordination with the League of Arab States.

An independent commission should be established to investigate the violations to which citizens have been subjected. Within three months of its formation, the national unity Government should hold free and fair elections under Arab and international monitoring in order to establish a constituent assembly.

In reporting to the Security Council on all such developments, I should like to state that immediately before coming to New York, I was compelled to take the urgent step of suspending the work of the Arab observers in Syria owing to the recent serious deterioration of the situation in the country after the Syrian Government openly declared that it would resort to a security-based option. That led to some observers being withdrawn until I take the matter to the Council of the Arab League in a few days.

As can be seen from the brief report on the Syrian crisis, the Arab League has consistently tried to find a peaceful political settlement to the Syrian crisis that would spare the lives of the Syrian people and meet their demands and aspirations. Furthermore, the League is fully aware that the international community's support for the Arab plan as the necessary mechanism to resolve the Syrian crisis is pivotal and crucial to its success and to achieving its objectives.

Therefore, allow me to reiterate that the League of Arab States looks forward to a supporting resolution of the Security Council that calls on all parties to immediately cease all acts of violence in order to protect the Syrian people and to engage in a serious national dialogue, under the aegis of the League of Arab States. Such a resolution should adopt the Arab initiative as a basis for resolving the crisis and should support the Arab League's mission when it decides to resume.

As Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, I must also stress the importance of the prompt cooperation of the United Nations and relevant international organizations with the Arab League in order to alleviate the worsening humanitarian conditions of the Syrian people.

In conclusion, allow me once again to thank the Security Council for having responded so rapidly to our request and for its support of the Arab initiative. I hope that such support will give a strong impetus to the Arab League's efforts and serve as an example of positive interaction between the United Nations and regional organizations.

I urge the Council not to fail the Syrian people in their plight. The violence and killing, whatever their source, must stop. We need a clear resolution in support of the Arab League's initiative. I would seek the Council's support for the draft resolution submitted by the Kingdom of Morocco.

The President: I thank Mr. Elaraby for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I, too, will speak in Arabic and am honoured to do so.

I recall that the Syrian Arab poet Nizar Qabbani, who is known and read by all Arabs, imagined, if not predicted, such a scenario and meeting years before his death in a very famous poem that begins: "Damascus, the treasure of my dreams, shall I bemoan to you Arabism or bemoan my fellow Arabs to you?"

I and my generation clearly remember that when we were at secondary school in the late 1950s and early 1960s, we used to sing the national anthem of the Algerian revolution in the morning instead of reciting the Syrian national anthem. We also used to give — or

donate, as we say in the Syrian dialect — our few pennies of pocket money to Arab liberation movements in the Gulf that were fighting for their freedom from British colonialism. As children, we were happy to donate our pocket money, little as it was, to help liberate our brothers in the Gulf from colonial control. That was long before the oil boom. At that time, Arabism was different from how some people perceive Arabism today.

Allow me to begin by expressing our appreciation to South Africa and to you personally, Mr. President, for your wise guidance of the work of the Security Council for this month. We take this opportunity to underscore once again the pride that we feel in the victory of your people and the peoples of Africa over the discriminatory policy of apartheid and in questioning the positions of some States that pay lip service to democracy and human rights. We ask them whom they supported during South Africa's struggle, which was crowned with success.

Syria is facing decisive and historic challenges. We wish for such a period to meet the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian population as a result of the will of our people, not of anyone else. While such events have broken the hearts of every Syrian, it compels Syrians of all affiliations and attitudes to choose the path of wisdom and to be guided by their resolute patriotic feelings so that the entire homeland, not part of it, can be victorious.

The Syrian people, who gave the world its first alphabet, are more familiar with the scent of jasmine than with the smell of blood in Damascus. The Syrian people have throughout the ages always been able to resolve their crises and domestic problems alone. It has never accepted any form of foreign intervention in the internal affairs of its homeland, Syria. It stood proud, refusing to undermine its cultural and national assets.

The Syrian people will do so once again through the participation of all Syrians to lead them away from the crisis and to contribute to the march of national reconstruction, with the primary objective of meeting the supreme interests of the homeland and nothing else, in an atmosphere of reconciliation among all. The homeland is the property of all.

In Syria we do not have a majority and a minority. There are only Syrians in Syria. I say the homeland is owned by all, and it is the property of all. It is a trust, even if some are misled and defy what is right. Syrian patriotism rejects external intervention and stresses

that Syria's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity are a red line. Syrian patriotism stresses that Syrians will stand as one against dissent and disorder, rejecting violence and resort to arms, while calling for reform. Homelands are built by all their citizens.

We Syrians have an opportunity to launch a sincere national dialogue and expedite the pace of reform in order to establish a genuine national partnership that preserves the security of the homeland and the citizen. That is the only way out of the crisis — a solution that responds to the legitimate aspirations and demands of the Syrian people without undermining the homeland. Future generations will hold accountable everyone who squandered this opportunity.

The Arab people would have very much hoped that the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and current Chairman of its Council of Ministers had come to the Security Council to request the Council to shoulder its responsibilities to end the Israeli occupation of Arab territories and escalating settler activities and killing. How strange it is for us to see some members of the League of Arab States resort to seeking the Security Council's support against Syria — Syria, which has never thought twice about making the ultimate sacrifice in defence of Arab causes.

Those who believe that the States that I am referring to; who have always stood for just Arab causes in the Council and beyond; who demonstrate their enthusiasm for the Arab League out of respect for its decisions; and who believe that these States are with us are truly deluding themselves. The fact is that this enthusiasm has emerged in a context diametrically opposed to the rightful interests of Arab causes.

What is new today, however, is that the Arab League has decided to take its decisions to the Security Council, which has imposed hundreds of vetoes against Arab causes. What is new is that the Arab League has transferred these unjust decisions to Syria behind Syria's back, as it were, and without consulting with its leadership, in a way that runs counter to the Charter of the League of Arab States and paves the way for an ongoing scenario of aggressive interference in the internal affairs of Syria.

These plans have cross-fertilized with other schemes and interests of non-Arab States that seek to destroy and destabilize Syria. This has happened for no other reason than that Syria does not want to depend on anyone and will not allow its sovereignty to be

compromised, and because it insists on the independence of its decisions and on the preservation of its sovereignty and the interests and security of its people.

After some powerful circles imposed on this international organization a policy of double standards, which it incorporated into every aspect of its work, howsoever tacit or unwritten, we are now witnessing the onset of a new phase based on creating illusory terms of reference and on a policy of distortion and imposing false facts. Some try to convince world public opinion that those who seek to defend the independence of their countries — following in the footsteps of such great leaders, such as Simón Bolívar, Gandhi, Dmitry Donskov, Mandela, George Washington, Mossadeq, De Gaulle, Nasser, Emir Abdul Qadir al-Jazairi, Sultan Basha al-Atrash, Ho Chi Minh and Sun Yat-sen — are classified as terrorists and pariahs, working outside international legitimacy.

Those who are trying to preserve their country and save it from creative chaos and terror have become violators of human rights and killers of their own people. Those who win the support of the majority of their people have lost legitimacy and have to step down. It is really strange these days to find certain oligarchic States that sponsor draft resolutions promoting the alternation of power, the freedom to demonstrate, democracy and the protection and promotion of human rights, do not even have a constitution, let alone a genuine electoral system, and only exercise democracy through satellite stations and fancy conference halls.

Those same countries unfortunately resort to the Security Council to ask Syria for reform and for democracy. Syria had a parliamentary Government in 1919, one year after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, while Lawrence of Arabia was wreaking havoc with the destinies and resources of our region and trying to turn the clock back on obscurantism.

Syria signed the protocol admitting the Arab observers because we were eager to keep this issue under the Arab roof. Syria proved its full and unerring commitment to the Arab plan of action and the protocol signed between it and the Secretariat of the League of Arab States. The report of the observer mission (S/2012/71, enclosure 4) confirms that fact in paragraphs 37, 38, 39 and 73. It confirms clearly what we have been saying. It confirms that there is a misleading, deliberate, systematic and politically

motivated media campaign to distort and fabricate facts on the ground. I would refer in particular to paragraphs 29, 68 and 69 of the report. The report also notes in paragraphs 26, 27, 71 and 75 the presence of terrorist groups that have exploited the legitimate demands of the Syrian people for reform to destabilize Syria, undermine its security, and undertake terrorist attacks against the institutions of the State and against civilians and military personnel alike.

Furthermore, paragraph 44 of the report clearly indicates that Gilles Jacquier, the French journalist, was killed as a result of mortar attacks fired by the opposition. Syria finds it strange that this tragic event did not move the French diplomacy to indignation, particularly given that Syria established a committee of inquiry to investigate the details of the event, chaired by a judge and with the participation of a representative of the French television channel at which the journalist used to work.

The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States read out some paragraphs in his statement. I regret that he selected some items from the report (see S/2012/71, enclosure 4) and left out others. I would like to read from paragraph 26:

"In certain situations, Government forces responded to attacks against their personnel with force. The observers noted that some of the armed groups were using flares and armour-piercing projectiles".

The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, who is a dear colleague, objected to requests by members of the Council to invite General Al-Dabi to participate in today's meeting. The report of the Arab observers was not sent to the Council as part of the documents that were dispatched from the headquarters of the League of Arab States.

The decision by the League of Arab States to go to the Council is but an attempt to bypass the success of the mission of the Arab observers and to ignore its report. The report, unfortunately, went against the schemes of some Arab and non-Arab parties who falsely claimed a commitment to the Arab role in settling the Syrian crisis while they simultaneously worked, using different means, to abort the observer mission while waging a fierce political and media war against it.

Certain Arab officials and some Europeans have questioned the usefulness of the mission, including the

Prime Minister of Qatar, who visited New York, Washington and other capitals only two weeks after the mission began its work, making statements to the effect that the continuation of the observer mission was useless and asking that the Syrian issue be transferred to the Security Council. That occurred while Syria was fully committed to the provisions of the protocol, despite a twofold increase in the number of Government forces killed and a threefold increase in the number of acts of aggression against public and private property. That was all due to instructions to armed groups from outside the country to use the mission's presence as a time for escalation.

Syria rejects any decision outside the agreed Arab plan of action and the protocol that it signed with the League of Arab States. It considers the resolution adopted by the meeting of the Council of the League of Arab States a violation of its national sovereignty, a flagrant interference in its internal affairs and a blatant violation of the purposes for which the League of Arab States was established. It is also a violation of article 8 of the Charter of the League of Arab States. Strangely enough, the League of Arab States requested the Syrian Government to extend the observer mission for another month. Damascus agreed immediately. However, the League of Arab States soon contradicted itself, ignoring the findings of the mission's report, attempting to transfer the crisis of an Arab country to the Security Council, and halting the continuing work of the observer mission.

The unbridled tendency of certain Western States to interfere in our internal and external affairs by various means is neither sudden nor novel. It has frequently and systematically occurred since the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 and the Balfour Declaration of 1917, not to mention the limitless support provided to Israel's aggressive and hostile policies and its occupation of Arab lands.

We all know that the international legal framework within whose parameters States operate is based on respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. Those two principles are enshrined in Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, not Article 52, to which Mr. Elaraby referred, as well as in article 8 of the Charter of the League of Arab States. In that context, we stress the exclusive responsibility of the Syrian Government in the preservation of civic peace and security and in protecting its citizens from acts of destruction and

sabotage undertaken by armed groups, not by peaceful demonstrators, in accordance with Syrian law as well as with the international agreements to which Syria is a party, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Regrettably, instead of respecting those established principles of international law, and in the context of feverish attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of Syria by co-sponsors of the French resolution against Syria, certain officials have suddenly fallen in love with the Syrian people after centuries of emotional hibernation towards them. Such people foolishly dream of the return of colonialism and hegemony through these resolutions. They concoct new terms to justify interference in Syria's internal affairs by misleading global public opinion. They are doing exactly what they did when they misled the world when 130,000 Libyan civilians were killed, and when 1 million Iraqis were killed under the pretext of looking for weapons of mass destruction that were never there to begin with, and under the pretext of promoting democracy. That is what they did with respect to the destruction of Afghanistan, under the pretext of fighting terrorism, or when they established clandestine prisons and detention centres in Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib, under the pretext of promoting freedom.

We stress that Syria draws its strength from the strength of its people and that it will stand firm in confronting the enemies of its people. We call upon all those Arabs and non-Arabs who are fomenting the crisis and who are bent on exacerbating it to reconsider those policies and to stop massacring Syrian civilians. One cannot be an arsonist and a fire-fighter at the same time. We call on them to support national dialogue and the Syrian political reform process, as implemented by the Syrian leadership in response to the legitimate demands of the people.

By way of example, in February we will hold a referendum on a new, finalized constitution for the country that guarantees party and political pluralism as well as alternation of power. Parliamentary elections will also be held in the first half of the year, leaving the final say to the democratic ballot box.

In conclusion, we expect the Security Council to be a platform for encouraging dialogue as a way to settle crises. We do not expect it to create or aggravate crises. We believe that an exacerbation of the crisis will undermine, not preserve, international peace and

security. In that regard, we welcome the recent initiative of the Russian Federation to sponsor an all-Syrian dialogue in Moscow to find a solution to the crisis.

The President: I now give the floor to members of the Security Council.

Mrs. Rodham Clinton (United States of America): Let me begin by thanking Prime Minister Hamad bin Jassim and Secretary-General Elaraby for their thorough briefings.

The Arab League has demonstrated important leadership in this crisis. For many months, the people of the region and the world have watched in horror as the Assad regime executed a campaign of violence against its own citizens. Civilians are gunned down in the streets, women and children tortured and killed: no one is safe, not even officials of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. According to United Nations estimates, more than 5,400 civilians have already died and that number is rising fast. The regime also continues to arbitrarily detain Syrian citizens, such as the activists Yahia al-Shorbaji and Anas al-Shogre, simply for demanding dignity and universal rights.

To date, the evidence is clear that Al-Assad's forces are initiating nearly all of the attacks that kill civilians. But as more citizens take up arms to resist the regime's brutality, violence is increasingly likely to spiral out of control. Already the challenges ahead for the Syrian people are daunting: a crumbling economy, rising sectarian tensions, and a cauldron of instability in the heart of the Middle East.

Fears about what follows Al-Assad, especially among Syria's minority communities, are understandable. Indeed, it appears as though Al-Assad and his cronies are working hard to pit Syria's ethnic and religious groups against each other, risking greater sectarian violence and even descent into civil war.

In response to this violent crackdown on peaceful dissent and protest, the Arab League launched an unprecedented diplomatic intervention, sending monitors into Syria's beleaguered cities and towns and offering President Al-Assad many chances to change course. These observers were greeted by thousands of protesters eager to share their aspirations for their universal rights and also the stories of what had befallen them and their families. But as the Arab League report makes clear — if one reads the entire report — the regime did not respect its pledges or the

presence of the monitors, and instead responded with excessive and escalating violence.

In the past few days, the regime's security forces have intensified their assault, shelling civilian areas and homes in other cities. This weekend, the Arab League suspended its monitoring mission, pointing to the regime's intransigence and the mounting civilian casualties.

So why is the Arab League here before the Security Council? It is because it is seeking the support of the international community for a negotiated, peaceful, political solution to this crisis and a responsible, democratic transition in Syria. We all have a choice. We can stand with the people of Syria and the region or become complicit in the continuing violence there.

The United States urges the Security Council to back the Arab League's demand that the Government of Syria immediately stop all attacks against civilians and guarantee the freedom of peaceful demonstrations. In accordance with the Arab League's plan, Syria must also release all arbitrarily detained citizens, return its military and security forces to their barracks, and allow full and unhindered access for monitors, humanitarian workers and journalists. We urge the Security Council to back the Arab League's call for an inclusive, Syrian-led political process to effectively address the legitimate aspirations and concerns of Syria's people, conducted in an environment free from violence, fear, intimidation and extremism.

I know that some members here may be concerned that the Security Council could be headed towards another Libya. That is a false analogy. Syria is a unique situation that requires its own approach, tailored to the specific circumstances occurring there. That is exactly what the Arab League has proposed — a path to a political transition that would preserve Syria's unity and institutions. This may not be exactly the plan that any of us ourselves would have designed. I know that many nations feel that way. But it represents the best efforts of Syria's neighbours to chart a way forward, and it deserves a chance to work.

I think it would be a mistake to minimize or understate the magnitude of the challenge that Syrians face in trying to build the rule of law and civil society on the ruins of a brutal and failed dictatorship. This will be hard. The results are far from certain. Success

is far from guaranteed. But the alternative — more of Al-Assad's brutal rule — is no alternative at all.

We all know that change is coming to Syria. Despite its ruthless tactics, the Al-Assad regime's reign of terror will end and the people of Syria will have the chance to chart their own destiny. The question for us is: How many more innocent civilians will die before that country is able to move forward towards the kind of future it deserves?

Unfortunately, it appears as though the longer this continues, the harder it will be to rebuild once President Al-Assad and his regime are transitioned and something new and better takes its place. Citizens inside and outside Syria have begun planning for a democratic transition, from the Syrian National Council to the courageous grass-roots local councils across the country, which are organizing under the most dangerous and difficult circumstances. But every day that goes by, their task grows more difficult.

The future of Syria as a strong and unified nation depends on thwarting a cynical, divide-and-conquer strategy. It will take all Syrians working together — Alawis and Christians hand in hand with Sunnis and Druze, side by side with Arabs and Kurds — to ensure that the new Syria is governed by the rule of law, that it respects and protects the universal rights of every citizen, regardless of ethnicity or sect, and that it takes on the widespread corruption that has marked the Al-Assad regime. If this is to work, Syria's minorities will have to join in shaping Syria's future, and their rights and voices will have to be heard, protected and respected.

Let me say directly to them today: "We do hear your fears and we do honour your aspirations. Do not let the current regime exploit them to extend this crisis." The leaders of Syria's business community, military and other institutions will have to recognize that their futures lie with the State and not the regime. Syria belongs to its 23 million citizens, not to one man or his family. Change can still be accomplished without dismantling the State or producing new tyranny. It is time for the international community to put aside our own differences and send a clear message of support to the people of Syria.

The alternative — spurning the Arab League, abandoning the Syrian people and emboldening the dictator — would compound this tragedy, mark a

failure of our shared responsibility, and shake the credibility of the Security Council.

The United States stands ready to work with every member in this Chamber to adopt a resolution that supports the Arab League's efforts, because those are the efforts that are well thought-out and focused on ending this crisis, that uphold the rights of the Syrian people, and that restore peace to Syria. That is the goal of the Arab League; that should be the goal of the Security Council — to help the Syrian people realize the goal of the future that they seek.

Mr. Juppé (France) (spoke in French): We meet today so that the Security Council can shoulder its responsibility towards a people that is suffering, in a region where peace is threatened by the bloody downward spiral of a regime gasping its last. The months-long silence of the Council is no longer acceptable. To its credit, the League of Arab States is here today to urge the Council to return to its responsibilities. France solemnly calls on the Council to live up to the mission entrusted to it by the United Nations Charter, by coming to the aid of a people and a region that want nothing more than peace and respect for their dignity.

The Arab League has taken action and done all it can to meet the demands of the situation by suspending Syria from the League, sending an observer mission and proposing a plan for political transition. I commend the League's courageous engagement in the Syrian conflict. I welcome the presence here today of its Secretary-General, Mr. Nabil Elaraby, and of the Prime Minister of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, and I thank them for the briefings they just gave us. I also commend the Kingdom of Morocco's decision to place a draft resolution before us, which France fully supports. I commend the collective efforts of all the States of the Arab League. I am well aware that decisions on the Syrian situation are particularly difficult to make and to put into action for some of them, if only because of their proximity to Damascus.

Today, I repeat, we meet to put an end to the scandalous silence of the Security Council. Indeed, I call it scandalous, and I will try to explain what I mean by that.

What is the current situation in Syria? A people has risen up to defend its liberty. Words are inadequate to describe the horror of the brutal repression. To say

that it is worsening or that it is tragic does not come close to the reality. According to the United Nations, 5,400 are dead. According to UNICEF, 384 children have been murdered. There are 15,000 prisoners, 15,000 refugees and daily torture.

I have long called some of the regime's actions crimes against humanity. The international commission of inquiry of the Human Rights Council corroborates that view. Beyond the statistics, the faces of children tortured, the bodies of women violated and the thousands of human victims of repression should guide our actions. The humanitarian situation is deteriorating day by day. What level of horror must be reached for the Council to enforce a stop to human rights violations and ensure free access to humanitarian assistance?

Every State has the responsibility to protect its civilian population. Not content with not protecting its civilians, the Syrian regime shamefully massacres them without restraint. That behaviour has direct consequences on international peace and security. Thousands of refugees are fleeing the violence, the sovereignty of neighbouring States is being violated, inter-community tensions are on the rise – all of which has a direct impact on the stability of an already fragile region. Even without reference to the responsibility to protect, those regional consequences are enough to establish the Council's responsibility.

How can this even be up for discussion? France has not stopped calling for the Council to work towards decisions and to put them to the vote. Those calls have been unsuccessful, with the exception of presidential statement S/PRST/2011/16 of 3 August 2011. Is that acceptable? I do not think so. Is it scandalous? I am certain of it.

Of course, we have continued our efforts despite the Council's silence. The European Union has 11 times increased the sanctions on the regime and its leaders. France has worked a great deal on that. We have established relations with the peaceful opposition. I have met many times with the Syrian National Council, a legitimate entity whose efforts to unify the opposition I commend.

However, the actions of the European Union or the Arab League, no matter how resolute, cannot replace action by the Council. By virtue of the legitimacy conferred on it by the United Nations Charter, it is the Council that can express authoritatively the will of the international community.

The Security Council is the keystone of international peace and security. If it is to remain so, it has the responsibility to pronounce cases as serious as Syria's.

How can it do so? It can do so by promptly and with broad support adopting the draft resolution introduced by Morocco. That text delivers the Council's support to the Arab League, which, strengthened by the crucial involvement of regional actors, is currently the only body to offer a realistic approach to a political resolution.

There are two essential elements to the draft resolution. First, it unequivocally condemns the repression carried out by the regime, without falling into the trap of a false comparison between that repression and the actions of the opposition on the ground. If a minority resorts to violence, the vast majority of Syrians who demonstrate do so barehanded in the streets, as compared with the indiscriminate violence of the regime. We respectfully pay tribute to those Syrian men and women who every day march for their freedom, knowing that the repression's bullets could kill them at any moment.

Because it was mentioned, I want to honour the memory of Gilles Jacquier, the French journalist killed as he carried out his work. I will not allow his death to be exploited. The Syrian authorities had the duty to provide him all necessary protection; clearly, they did not do so. The report of the observer mission before us (S/2012/71, enclosure 4) does not go into the exchange of fire that caused the death of my countryman. Yes, the report says that the journalist was killed by lethal fire from the opposition, but that idea is not endorsed by the Arab League and we are still waiting for the Syrian authorities to shed every possible light on the incident.

The second essential element of the Arab League's proposal is that it offers the Council's support to the Arab League's initiative in all three of its main aspects: the demand for an end to violence, the call for free access for the observers, and, especially, for the first time, the articulation of a credible political transition process. It will be up to the Arab League to implement it. Our responsibility is to help it by sending the clear message to the Syrian regime that the international community is united in support of the Arab efforts.

Of course, we would have liked to see the Council go further, but we need a rapid response to finally open the way to a resolution to this horrifying

crisis. We are therefore prepared to vote now on the text proposed by Morocco.

Some have drawn an analogy with the conflict in Libya. That is a pretext. It is alleged that there is a plan for a military intervention in Syria. That is a myth. Absolutely nothing in the draft resolution distributed to Council members by the Permanent Representative of Morocco can be construed as an authorization of the use of force. The draft does not fall under Chapter VII. We are not preparing any military operation.

The tragedy of the Syrian people is sufficient justification for our action. Our goal is simple — to find a peaceful way out of the crisis that would allow the Syrian people to freely express their aspirations. Syrian society and its various components — and no one else — must freely determine the future. We have no intention of imposing a political regime from the outside. The Arab League offers the only viable prospect for achieving that goal. Let us grasp it. Let us rise above our differences and support the plan submitted today. Let us live up to our responsibilities and to the political and moral duty that falls to us from the peaceful uprising of the Syrian people inspired by the momentum of the Arab Spring.

There is no time to lose. In less than a year, more than 5,000 lives have been lost to the repression. Each week squandered means hundreds more deaths — each day, dozens more. In the memory of all the victims, I urge the members of the Council to vote immediately in favour of the text so that a political process can begin to put an end to the Syrian nightmare.

Mr. Hague (United Kingdom): I, too, thank the Prime Minister of Qatar and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States for their reports and their powerful words, and we are all grateful to you, Mr. President, for presiding over this debate.

Our task as a Council is clear: we must address the horrifying violence that has engulfed Syria for the last 10 months, which is an unmitigated tragedy for the people of that country and a real threat to international peace and security, and we must do so in a way that gives the greatest possible chance of a peaceful and lasting solution. The League of Arab States has proposed a way to achieve this, and it should be congratulated and supported in doing so. Its plan is at the heart of the draft resolution put forward by the Kingdom of Morocco, with the full support of the

United Kingdom and, I think, with the support of the majority of Security Council members.

If implemented in full, the Arab League plan would lead to an end to all violence against Syrian civilians and attacks against Syrian State institutions. It would remove the major stumbling blocks to reform and give confidence to the Syrian people. It would start an inclusive Syrian-led political process that would allow the Syrian people to determine their future peacefully, and it would lead to a national unity Government and elections.

Syria needs a path out of conflict and misery, and, with this plan, the Arab League has provided one that is credible and viable. It has done so after three months of engagement, described by the Secretary-General, with all sides in Syria; after multiple visits to Damascus by ministerial delegations from Arab nations; on the basis of the work of over 150 Arab League monitors inside Syria; and in the light of their own deep understanding of their own region.

The Arab world is now asking the Security Council to put its weight and authority behind the plan. This is not the West telling Syria what to do. It is not the permanent members of the Security Council seeking to impose their view. This is the Arab nations calling on the Security Council to help address the crisis in Syria and the threat that it poses to the stability of their region. The Secretary-General has come here and urged us not to let the Syrian people down in their plight.

Members of the Council have often called for Arab leadership in the past, and that should be respected now by all nations of the world. Can any member of the Council today claim to be in a better position to judge how best to support peace and stability in Syria than these Arab nations themselves?

The draft resolution does not propose imposing change on Syria from outside; it calls for the Syrian people to be allowed to make their choices for themselves. It does not call for military action and could not be used to authorize it. Indeed, the Secretary-General has stressed that the plan of the Arab League specifically does not include any outside intervention. It does not contain coercive measures. It is not a Chapter VII draft resolution. But it should, in our view, put the leaders of Syria on notice that measures will be considered by the Council if there is not an immediate end to the violence and if the Arab League plan

continues to be ignored. That warning is important. For too long the Syrian Government has promised reform and continued the violence.

At any time over the last 10 months they could have stopped the bloodshed; they could have seized the initiative; they could have introduced bold and lasting reform that meets the aspirations of Syrians for greater political freedom.

But the facts over recent months speak for themselves. When the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2011/16) on Syria in August last year, the death toll stood at approximately 1,000. When a draft Security Council resolution was put forward in October and vetoed here (see S/PV.6627), 3,000 people had died.

We believe that today, nearly 6,000 Syrians have died in appalling circumstances. That includes, as we have heard, 384 children. Between 30 and 100 people currently die every single day from the violence in Syria. They will be dying as we speak. Thousands more are enduring torture, imprisonment and sexual violence, including the rape of children.

The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic spoke about the idealism of children in his country in the 1950s and 1960s, without noting the irony that the descendants of those children, the children of 2012, are now being tortured and murdered in the name of their own Government. It is not acceptable to try to blame the situation in Syria on everyone else, from outside intervention to the Gulf States, to French diplomats, to Lawrence of Arabia — this does not excuse such repression and violence, which is shame on any nation.

We know about those crimes because they have been documented by impartial bodies of the United Nations. How long will Syrian families have to live in fear that their children will be killed or tortured, before the Security Council adopts a meaningful resolution? How many people need to die before the consciences of all world capitals on this subject are stirred?

The people of Syria cannot afford to wait while more false promises and half-measures from their Government are accompanied by brutality on the ground. There will be no reform or political progress in Syria while such violence continues. There can be no doubt that the violence is worsening; the risk of civil war is intensifying; and the threat to the stability of the region is growing.

With each day that passes, finding a way back from the brink will be harder, and innocent lives will be needlessly and wrongfully lost — deaths which the Council could help to avert by acting in a united manner.

Today, as I understand it, we all agree around this table that the Security Council has a role to play. We all want a peaceful political solution that ensures the stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria. We all agree that this process should be led by the people of Syria themselves, with the support of their region and the international community. We all agree that the rights of minorities in Syria must be safeguarded and respected. We all agree that military action would not be an appropriate response to the complex situation in Syria, something this draft resolution makes absolutely clear. We all welcome the work of the Arab League. So, based on agreeing on all those things, now we must have the will to match such agreement by being able to agree on a draft resolution.

Even as we meet, the gravest of crimes are being committed in Syria. Responsibility for those crimes lies overwhelmingly at the door of the Syrian authorities. But if the Council cannot agree to adopt a resolution condemning the violence, backing the Arab League and enabling a peaceful resolution, then that failure of the Council will be judged by the people of Syria and of their region.

We should unite behind the Arab League plan, and that is what I urge all members of the Council to do this week. We should remain seized of the situation in Syria, returning to the matter if the violence still continues. To fail to do so would be to undermine the credibility of this institution, betray the Syrian people, snub the Arab League and fail in the Council's responsibilities.

Mr. Caballeros (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin my statement on a personal note. I represent the Government of President Otto Pérez Molina, who took office barely two weeks ago. My presence here today reflects our commitment to the United Nations and our intention to responsibly carry out our role as a recently elected member of the Council. We have come here fully committed to building consensus for the maintenance of international peace and security. We appreciate the convening of this important meeting in response to the request made by the League of Arab States in its letter dated 22 January

addressed to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (S/2012/71).

We are especially pleased at the presence of and information provided by Mr. Nabil Elaraby, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, as well as His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, Chair of the current session of the Arab League Council at the ministerial level. We also listened attentively to the statement made by Ambassador Bashar Ja'afari of the Syrian Arab Republic.

In addition to the information provided today, we have previously had access to the decisions adopted in recent weeks by the Council of Ministers, the protocol concluded between the League of Arab States and the Government of Syria on 19 December 2011, and the text of the report prepared by the head of the observer mission, General Mustafa Al-Dabi. All of this has improved our capacity to understand what is happening on the ground, and has at the same time contributed to our growing alarm at a clearly deteriorating situation. The events of the past few days, and the decision of the League of Arab States to suspend its mission, have only served to heighten our apprehensions.

Once again, the Council is addressing the possible management on the part of the community of nations of the amazing changes occurring in the Middle East and North Africa. As with all change, especially when it arises from the grass roots of society, its final outcome tends to be unpredictable. We commonly affirm that those changes are the sole and exclusive purview of the citizens of each country, but it is undeniable — and events confirm this to be the case — that the wave of change does not recognize borders, and that whatever happens in one nation has an impact on the rest. This explains the presence of the League of Arab States in the case we are addressing today — the situation in Syria.

We have listened attentively to the different narratives offered on the matter, which, among other aspects, try to assign quotas of responsibility to different actors, domestic and foreign. While the facts of what actually is happening are sorted out — a task made more difficult by the lack of access to the media, and in spite of the presence until a few days ago of the mission of observers — two realities overshadow the rest. First, the toll of human life and the general suffering imposed on the population are on the rise. Secondly, the spiral of violence points at the real

possibility of a civil war between Syrians. The immediate task at hand, then, is to put an end to violence and to reverse the trend towards even greater misery.

The League of Arab States must be commended for occupying the front lines that pursue these two objectives. We also sympathize with that organization's initiative to seek what is termed an "Arab solution" to the crisis. Our delegation is prepared to accompany the League of Arab States in the fulfilment of said solution, whose prime objective is humanitarian in nature, but whose broader goal is viewed in the framework of a firm and longer-term political solution. Some question whether this initiative is realistic, given the immediate rejection it provoked from the Government of the Arab Republic of Syria, but for our part we are willing to give the League of Arab States the opportunity to pursue its initiative within a predetermined time frame.

Should this initiative not bear fruit, we believe that, whether we like it or not, we would be failing in our obligation if we were to permit an already grave situation to deteriorate even further, with the foreseeable domestic and international repercussions on peace and security. We are more than aware of the serious dilemmas to which this gives rise. Non-intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign States and respect for their territorial integrity are cardinal principles of our foreign policy, but we also acknowledge the obligation of all States to observe certain norms of conduct in relations to their own populations.

We understand that peacefully expressed popular demands cannot be equated with a Government that uses force to address those demands. That is why, in an era when the principle of the responsibility to protect is being called into question, we are not ashamed to affirm that, with some nuances that we have explained in other forums, we support that principle. Our position is far from inviting interventions; what we demand is the strict observation of the norms of conduct to which I have referred. In its absence, Governments that flagrantly violate those norms naturally expose themselves to the consequences, whose precise shape and scope are susceptible to a wide spectrum of possibilities.

In summary, we appeal to all parties to make a last effort to find a way out of the Syrian crisis. The initiative of the League of Arab States, or variants

thereof, offer the potential for such a way out. Should it fail, the escalation of violence, which has assumed dramatic proportions in recent days, has not left many options to this Council to carry out its own responsibility in accordance with the Charter.

Mr. Portas (Portugal): I thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this important meeting. I wish to welcome His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Qatar, and Mr. Nabil Elaraby, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, to the Council. I would also like to thank them for their comprehensive and very useful briefings, and commend them both for their tireless efforts to resolve the crisis in Syria.

I decided to participate in this meeting of the Security Council for the simple reason that what is happening in Syria is of such seriousness; that the inaction of the international community is so shocking; that an Arab solution is so urgent; and that a decision of the United Nations is so essential that I felt compelled to participate in this debate and to do whatever I can to transform deadlock into solution, hesitation into will.

The situation in Syria is both unacceptable and untenable. For 10 months now, we have witnessed the most brutal repression of civilians and the most flagrant and systematic violation of their fundamental human rights. The brutality of the Syrian authorities has left in its wake thousands of dead and many more thousands maimed, imprisoned and tortured. They have shown their contempt for basic human rights and their unwillingness to protect their population. According to UNICEF, nearly 400 children have lost their lives in Syria. This is indeed a measure of the atrocities committed.

The only aspiration of the Syrian people, inspired by their brethren in other Arab countries, was simply to voice their protest and to pave the way for a democratic society. They did so peacefully and unarmed, only to be met by bullets, beatings and arrests. These victims and their families merit our full solidarity. As deadly violence goes on unabated, the situation in Syria continues to spiral dangerously towards civil war, with serious risks for peace and security in the region.

And yet, the Security Council has not been able to fully meet its responsibilities regarding Syria and the Syrian people, or to play its role as the primary

body entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. Allow me to be clear. The argument voiced during these 10 months that the choice in Syria was between inaction or civil war does not hold, given what we see, hear and read every day. The country is descending into civil war. The real option now is between an escalation of the conflict or a controlled and negotiated political solution.

Portugal fully supports the efforts of the League of Arab States to find a peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis that both promotes the end of violence and the implementation of a serious political process that will establish a free and democratic Syria. We have commended the deployment of the Arab observer mission and the decision to extend its mandate. Notwithstanding the deployment of the mission, the regime continues with its violent oppression against peaceful voices of dissent and its widespread, systematic and gross violations of human rights, as documented by the commission of inquiry of the Human Rights Council.

The Commission's accounts are horrifying, and all those responsible for these brutal violations and abuses must be held accountable. We were appalled by the killing last week of an official of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. We must reiterate, firmly, that the deliberate targeting of humanitarian personnel is simply a form of barbarism.

By persistently ignoring numerous appeals to put an end to its bloody crackdown, the Syrian authorities have fuelled escalation and violence. Yet, even under the repression they are subject to, we trust that the Syrian opposition movement will maintain the peaceful nature of its legitimate objectives.

I cannot adequately stress the urgency of an immediate end to all violence. Equally pressing is the undertaking of a serious political process leading to a democratic, plural political system where all citizens, regardless of affiliation, ethnicity or belief, are treated equally and can fulfil their legitimate aspirations.

Some months ago, President Al-Assad announced reforms. Yet, he did not fulfil either those promises or his commitments to the Arab League. In situations of that nature, the old principle that it is enough to change only a few things so that everything stays the same is inapplicable. Quite to the contrary, the lesson of history is the following: Where there is no reform, there will be revolution.

Portugal remains committed to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria. The longer the crisis persists, the deeper the scars on Syrian society will be.

My country values highly the role of regional organizations and their contributions to peace and security. We believe that the League of Arab States is best suited to lead the efforts aimed at solving a crisis that entails direct risks and threats to many of its member States.

As I said, we fully support the efforts of the League of Arab States. We supported without hesitation the request for this meeting. We have staunchly supported the League's decision of 22 January and the political road map therein as the only viable path towards establishing a credible political dialogue among all Syrians, leading to a peaceful political transition.

We urge all Syrian parties, factions and stakeholders to respond positively to that proposal. Portugal fully subscribes to the need for the formation of a national unity Government and strongly appeals to President Al-Assad to delegate full authority to his deputy in order to carry out a peaceful political transition in accordance with what has been underlined by the Prime Minister of Qatar.

To cut a long story short, Portugal appeals to all members of the Council not to look at Syria with the eyes of the past, in the light of old divisions. What is at stake in Syria is an Arab initiative for a problem that is, first and foremost, an Arab one. It is a crisis that the world and the United Nations cannot ignore. All members of the Council should feel comfortable with the initiative of the Arab League because no member of the Council is comfortable with the daily massacres in Syria.

Inaction is not only unacceptable but also irresponsible. It is high time to live up to our responsibilities and to address the legitimate demands of the Syrian people and the expectations of the countries of the region. We must unite behind a strong and clear message to the Syrian authorities. It is also the credibility of the Security Council that is at stake. We must tell the Syrian authorities, unequivocally, that the killing must stop and that a political solution must be sought, based on the proposals of the Arab League.

It is for those reasons that Portugal commends Morocco for submitting a draft resolution with those

objectives in view. We will continue to engage in good faith with all Council members in order to expeditiously adopt the draft resolution. The situation in Syria has already brought serious disruption to its neighbours. I wish, in that context, to express my country's deep appreciation for the assistance that countries of the region — Turkey in particular — have been providing to those fleeing violence, persecution and repression.

But let us be clear. If we do not act, not only will we be condemning the Syrian people to yet more violence and repression; we will be increasing the threats to the peace and security of the whole region. There is no more time to lose.

A year ago, the people of Tunisia set in motion a wave that quickly changed the face of the Arab world. After decades of silence and dread, ordinary people broke away from the shackles of fear. They found their voice, bravely took to the streets and made themselves heard. They strove for freedom, for equality and for their rights to build a democratic State and to citizenship. They refused to cower in submission. Those are also the aspirations of the Syrian people, who also refuse to submit to disproportionate brutal force.

President Roosevelt included among his four famous freedoms the freedom from fear. It is our duty to help the Syrian people to free themselves from the fear inflicted daily upon them. To put a stop to the killings and allow for a peaceful solution, we must act and we must act now. As Dostoyevsky said, "to live without hope is to cease to live". It is up to us to give hope to and protect the lives of the Syrian people.

Mr. Amrani (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, let me thank you, Sir, for convening this important meeting of the Security Council. My thanks go also to the other members of the Council for providing Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, head of the Arab Ministerial Committee on Syria, and His Excellency Mr. Nabil Elaraby, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, with the opportunity to enlighten the Council on the tragic situation in Syria and on the League's determined efforts to address the crisis.

My delegation has listened carefully to the two briefings on the crisis in sisterly Syria and the consequences of a confrontation that has claimed innocent lives, led to the severe suffering of civilians

and caused the displacement of families within Syria or to neighbouring countries.

We have noted in particular that the two Arab officials have stressed the importance, utility and viability of the Arab initiative for addressing the situation in Syria and laying the ground for a solution based on dialogue and national reconciliation and concord. We have also noted their emphasis on calling upon Council members to endorse the Arab plan and extend to it the support necessary to ensure its earliest possible implementation in order to end the increasingly painful situation in Syria. We express our sincere hope that the Security Council will support the Arab plan, allowing Syria to regain its national harmony, tranquillity and stability.

The phenomenon now commonly called the Arab Spring has highlighted the aspirations of Arab peoples to entrench democracy and respect for human rights and to live in dignity and social justice. The Arab countries have responded to those legitimate demands according to their respective specificities, abilities and experience. Building on their active solidarity with those aspirations, the Arab countries have contributed when necessary, through the League of Arab States or subregional groupings, to resolving intractable crises, which cannot be likened to interference in the internal affairs of the concerned countries. Such involvement has been undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, which calls on regional organizations to strive to prevent conflicts and their escalation and to seek their resolution by available peaceful means, without prejudice to the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Thus, in view of the escalating situation in Syria and the thousands of victims felled, the widening confrontations and the absence of dialogue between the parties, the League of Arab States took the initiative to stop the bloodshed by sending a team of observers to monitor the Syrian Government's implementation of its commitments and to protect unarmed Syrian civilians.

Morocco was among the first countries to contribute to the Arab League's observer mission, which had access to areas where confrontations had been taking place. Morocco kept its observers in the field until the end of last week, despite the difficulties and obstacles they faced in fulfilling their humanitarian mission.

In that regard, while we applaud the efforts made by the members of the mission, who worked devotedly under very difficult and dangerous conditions, we fully understand the motivations and reasons that led the States of the Gulf Cooperation Council to withdraw their own observers from the mission. We also consider the decision of the League of Arab States to suspend the mission as being fully justified. That decision was prompted by the dangerous escalation of the situation and by Syria's choice of the security option, which has claimed an increasing number of victims.

We believe that the mission afforded a good opportunity to establish conditions conducive to the calm required to turn the page and begin a new period free of violence. However, the Council of the Arab League, at its ministerial meeting of 22 January, concluded in its assessment that Syria's implementation of some of its commitments was insufficient.

The presentation of the report of the observer mission (S/2012/71, enclosure 4) has coincided with a very serious escalation of violence and an unprecedented increase in the number of victims, including children and sometimes entire families. That led the League of Arab States to reassess the situation and launch an Arab initiative that addresses all aspects of the crisis. It is a political approach based on the non-use of force, dialogue, the formation of a national unity Government and preparations for democratic elections.

It is worth recalling that, during all phases of the Arab endeavours, the Arab countries have consistently stressed the following cardinal principles. The first involves the immediate and full cessation of all acts of violence and use of force, as well as the promotion of political dialogue. The second principle is to allow the Syrian people to fulfil their legitimate aspirations to build their national institutions. The third is to preserve Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the cohesiveness of its pluralistic society. Finally, the fourth principle is to exclude any foreign military intervention.

In accordance with paragraph 7 of the latest decision of the Council of the Arab League, taken at its ministerial meeting of 22 January, and in its capacity as the Arab member of the Security Council, Morocco has introduced a draft resolution that enjoys the support of Member States both inside and outside the Security Council.

The objective of the draft in particular is to seek Security Council endorsement of the road map adopted by the Arab League in order to reach a political solution to the crisis in Syria. It also seeks the Council's support for Arab decisions aimed at ending all acts of violence and the bloodshed in Syria.

We sincerely hope that negotiations on the draft will produce consensus in the Security Council that gives impetus to the launching of a political process involving both the Syrian Government and the opposition, through serious and responsible dialogue that leads to a new era in the great history of our brotherly Syrian people.

Mr. Link (Germany): I would like first to thank His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani and His Excellency Mr. Nabil Elaraby for their briefings. I commend the efforts of the League of Arab States towards resolving the crisis in Syria. It was important for the Council to listen to them today.

The Arab Spring has demonstrated that the people of the region want to shape their future peacefully through negotiations and discussions, not at gunpoint and not in an atmosphere of fear and violence.

More than 10 months have passed since events in Deraa and Damascus sparked peaceful protests in Syria against the Assad regime. The regime reacted with a brutal crackdown on its own people that has left thousands dead and is still ongoing. That violence must stop immediately. The Syrian people have been calling for freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly and the ability to freely choose their leaders. President Al-Assad has been responding by sending his tanks.

The Arab League has heeded the calls of the people of the region. Three months ago, it elaborated a working plan to resolve the crisis, to which the Syrian Government committed. However, the Al-Assad regime did not substantially comply with the agreement. There was no cessation of violence, not all of those arrested were released, and there was no withdrawal of the military from the cities and residential areas. On the contrary, there has been a notable increase in the regime's violence over the past few days. That has forced the observer mission to suspend its activities. The country stands at the brink of civil war, with implications for peace and stability in the region. The Council has been silent too long. It has to step up to its responsibilities.

We must not forget that the majority of the demonstrations in Syria have been overwhelmingly peaceful, whereas the reaction of the authorities has been excessive. Those facts have been recorded by the international commission of inquiry established by the Human Rights Council. That is why we also advocate a Security Council commission of inquiry.

As the report of the commission of inquiry (A/HRC/S-17/2/Add.1) concludes, the systematic human rights violations perpetrated by the Syrian regime have been conducted pursuant to deliberate State policy. Members of the Syrian military and security forces may have committed crimes against humanity.

On 22 January, the Arab League set out a political framework for the way forward that includes the formation of a transitional Government. The Arab League has turned to this Council to ask for support. We hereby lend our voice to its demands, and we fully support its plan and all its previous efforts. We must seize this opportunity. Now is the time for the Security Council to act. The draft resolution endorsing the demands made by the Arab League is on the table. The text is the product of fruitful cooperation between members of this Council and Arab countries, and was introduced to the Council by Morocco. It has Germany's full support.

We have to work for a political solution with regional ownership. We owe it to the Syrian people not to close our eyes in the face of the ongoing repression. It is our responsibility as members of the Security Council. Countries all over the world, especially those of the region, have expressed their support. Let us act. Above all, let us act without further delay.

Mr. Haroon (Pakistan): At the outset, let me extend a very warm welcome to His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, Prime Minister of Qatar, and His Excellency Mr. Nabil Elaraby, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, and thank them for sparing their valuable time to brief the Council.

Pakistan enjoys long-standing and close brotherly relations with all members of the League of Arab States. That relationship is underpinned by a common heritage and shared values. We greatly value the role of regional organizations such as the League of Arab States in promoting the cause of peace and development. We also support regional processes leading to the peaceful resolution of disputes. That is a good example for the United Nations. We therefore highly appreciate

the efforts of the Qatari Prime Minister and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

By seizing the moment and by deploying the observer mission, the League of Arab States has indeed proved that great strides can be made in the resolution of regional issues through regional mechanisms. We hope that the efforts of the League will bear fruit through the return of peace and normalcy to Syria through a process of dialogue and negotiation and without any resort to force and coercion.

The security situation in Syria continues to be a source of serious concern to us all. The reports of continuing violence and bloodshed cannot and should not be taken lightly by anyone. We strongly condemn the use of force against any peaceful protesters. The killing and injuring of innocent people must stop. We call on both sides to shun violence, pursue the path of dialogue and reconciliation, and engage in a results-oriented and inclusive political process leading to the peaceful resolution of the problem.

We must be mindful of the fact that whatever we decide in this Chamber in the coming days will have long-term implications not only in Syria, but in the Middle East as a whole. That region can ill afford further instability. The situation therefore requires a collective analysis towards obtaining a solution.

We also want to emphasize that while we in the Security Council are and should remain the upholders of the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the discussion must remain in full cognizance of and respect for the independence, unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria. It also should remain within the framework of Chapter VI of the Charter and the principles of the pacific settlement of disputes.

We support the Arab League's efforts, including the deployment of observers. We also commend and support the services rendered by members of the observer mission, who are performing their duties to the best of their abilities despite working in difficult and sometimes dangerous circumstances.

We take hope for peace from the words of the Prime Minister of Qatar in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Ministerial Committee on Syria when he says that we are not calling for a military intervention and that we are not for a regime change either, for that is a matter that is up to the Syrian people to decide. All that, in reaffirmation of the sovereignty and integrity of

Syria, was also voiced by Secretary-General Elaraby and reiterated by the French and British representatives. I am hopeful that that will be explicitly and adequately reflected in the draft resolution being brought before the Council. We hope that other members of the Council will join us in commending the Arab League. We also hope that the mission will continue its work.

Let me be absolutely clear. All the grief vented in the Council might result in fruition only if we swiftly, with cohesion and consideration, replace mere rhetoric. Therefore I conclude by saying that, in terms of the Council's action, we should strive to achieve consensus, for a unanimous message will always be better and essential to promote our objectives and peace in Syria.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the initiative of the League of Arab States for the convening of today's meeting with the participation of the Prime Minister of Qatar and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

Today we meet at a crucial moment, which is perhaps the last opportunity to break the vicious circle of violence into which Syria and its people have been sucked. Worsening of the crisis and its plunging into the chaos of a full-scale conflict would not only be a tragedy for the Syrian people, but would also inevitably destabilize the neighbouring countries and further stir up the strategically important region of the Middle East.

What is the solution? What can the international community do to prevent a fatal development of events? The answer is as complex as it is simple. Security Council members found the key to it essentially at the beginning of the crisis, when on 3 August 2011 it adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2011/16). In it are two fundamental provisions: violence by all sides must cease, and the crisis can be resolved only through a Syrian-led inclusive political process. If all key players of the international community had concentrated their efforts on implementing these provisions, then, we are convinced, the crisis would have long since been overcome. Unfortunately, this has not been the case.

Russia, which for years has enjoyed close and friendly partnerships with the Syrian people and the Arab world, fought from the very beginning to ensure that the Syrian people would be able to define for themselves, without bloodshed and violence, a course and a format for the necessary social, economic and political transformations. We are convinced that at a

time of extreme internal political crisis, the role of the international community should not be to exacerbate conflict or meddle by using economic sanctions or military force. Instead, it should foster dialogue to seek an optimally effective and smooth resolution.

With a view to halting the violence and establishing a Syrian-led inclusive political process, Russia has stepped up its diplomatic efforts with Damascus, the Syrian opposition and the League of Arab States. In our view, the League has an important role, with the international community, in resolving the Syrian crisis. Russia did much to ensure that the League and Damascus agreed on the deployment of the League's monitoring mission in Syria.

At the first stage of its work the mission was already playing a useful role from the standpoint of lowering the violence somewhat, so that — and this is of key importance — there was more objective information on the nature of the events unfolding in Syria, in spite of pressures on the mission. In the mission's report on the results of its work between 24 December and 18 January 2012 (S/2012/71, annex, enclosure 4), it is clearly confirmed that in a number of Syrian neighbourhoods armed elements are attacking Syrian security forces and peaceful civilians. That led to the conclusion that all sides in Syria, not just the Government, must take on obligations to cease all forms of violence.

We know from different sources what is going on in Syria. For example, after the city of Zabadani came under the control of fighters, murders, looting and beatings began. The country residence of the Russian ambassador was looted. Some thousand peaceful residents deserted the city.

It should be noted that the last section of the mission's report contains a conclusion that a dialogue among the various Syrian sides should run in parallel with the mission's work, and there must be a political process as well.

The fraternal ties that we enjoy with the League of Arab States allow us not only to support our Arab friends, but also, when necessary, to criticize them for inconsistencies. We did not conceal our belief that the League's decision to suspend the membership of Damascus and to impose sanctions on Syria was counterproductive. The League's position with respect to the monitoring mission could have been more firm. On the one hand, the League decided to continue the

mission; on the other, some countries have begun withdrawing their observers.

We are concerned with the recent decision to suspend the work of the mission. As we understand, according to the mission's leadership, this was a consequence of a recent burst of violence and of a fatwa broadcast on a Saudi television station by a Salafi preacher of Syrian origin, giving his blessing to spilling the blood of observers. We think that the work of the mission in the near future should continue, with appropriate support from all sides.

Of particular importance in the context of efforts to settle the crisis is the League's initiative of 22 January 2012 to call on the Syrian Government and all Syrian opposition groups to join in dialogue under the League's aegis. Engaging with one's opponents should not be the duty of diplomats only, but also of politicians, especially when the fate of one's country is at stake.

Russia continues to act in unison with the League. We appeal to the Syrian authorities and all opposition groups to send their representatives to Moscow at a mutually agreed time for informal contacts, without preconditions. This would allow the Syrian parties to discuss many issues on the national agenda without any limitations, including the task of preparing an inter-Syrian dialogue under the aegis of the League of Arab States.

Now it is more important than ever to engage in a dialogue that leads to a necessary agreement on the political future of the country. Can the Security Council play a constructive role here? We think so. That is why on 15 December 2011 the Russian delegation submitted to the Council a draft resolution, which drew on the political thrust of the presidential statement of 3 August (S/PRST/2011/16). The draft received a measure of support in the Council. We circulated an updated version among our colleagues yesterday.

We suggest that in drawing up its decision the Council should be guided by the principle of causing no harm. We reject any sanctions, any attempts to employ the Council's instruments to fuel conflict or to justify any eventual foreign military interference. But that is not the only matter at hand. The Council cannot impose parameters for an internal political settlement. The Charter gives it no such authority. The sides must be encouraged to engage in dialogue rather than be intimidated into doing so.

We therefore have taken into account the draft resolution presented recently by the delegation of Morocco. We found some of the elements of the text of our draft in it. This gives rise to hope. A consensus position among Council members on Syria is not only possible, but necessary.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I welcome to our meeting His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, and the Ambassador of Syria. I welcome their briefings to the Council.

Syria is an important country in the Middle East. Its stability affects the security and stability of the entire Middle East region. Like other members of the Security Council, China has closely followed the developments in Syria.

China is of the view that the Syrian people's request for reform and safeguarding their interests should be respected. It is imperative to put an immediate end to all violence in Syria and to stop the killing of innocent civilians. At the same time, an inclusive political process for the wide participation of all Syrian parties must be started without delay, to speed up reform and resolve differences and disputes peacefully through dialogue and consultations, so as to restore stability to Syria and to enable it to embark on the path of all-around development.

We believe that Syria and its people are capable and resourceful enough to find a way to resolve their issues and to find a political system and a degree of economic growth suited to Syria's national conditions. The international community can play a positive and constructive role in this regard and can provide assistance for a peaceful political settlement of the Syrian issue through dialogue.

Syria is a member of the Arab world. China hopes to see a proper settlement of the Syrian crisis within the framework of the Arab League. We support the League's efforts to seek a political solution of the Syrian issue and to maintain stability in the region. We hope to see the success of its mediation efforts.

The Arab League observer mission plays a significant role in helping the international community learn about the real situation in Syria. We attach importance to the report submitted by the that observer

mission (S/2012/71, annex, enclosure 4). We hope the mission will continue to fulfil its mandate and carry out objective and impartial investigations. We call on the Syrian Government and other parties concerned to provide full cooperation to the mission in that regard.

China has repeatedly stressed that the actions of the Security Council on the Syrian issue should comply with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, help ease tensions in Syria, promote political dialogue and defuse disputes, and help maintain peace and stability in the Middle East region.

In the meantime, China has consistently taken a cautious approach to sanctions. Sanctions, rather than assistance in resolving an issue, often lead to further complications of the situation. We firmly oppose the use of force to resolve the Syrian issue, as well as practices, such as forcibly pushing for regime change, that violate the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the basic norms that govern international relations.

China supports the draft resolution proposed by Russia on the Syrian issue and takes note of the new text that has been distributed by Morocco in the Security Council. China is ready to act in accordance with the aforementioned principled position, to engage actively and constructively in consultations, and to work with all parties concerned to push for an appropriate settlement of the Syrian issue through peaceful dialogue.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting. We are grateful to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the State of Qatar, His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, and to the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, His Excellency Mr. Nabil Elaraby, as well as to the Permanent Representative of Syria, His Excellency Mr. Bashar Ja'afari, for their briefings.

Azerbaijan is deeply concerned by the continuing destabilization and widespread violence in Syria, which have led to the death of many people. On 3 August 2011, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRS 2011/16) condemning the widespread violations of human rights and the use of force against civilians by the Syrian authorities. The Council, *inter alia*, called for an immediate end to all violence and urged all sides to act with the utmost restraint and to refrain from reprisals, including attacks against State

institutions. Related resolutions were adopted also by the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.

Despite all those steps and repeated calls of the international community, the situation in Syria continued to deteriorate, causing scores of deaths and injuries. The suicide terrorist attacks that occurred in Damascus on 23 December 2011 and 6 January 2012, which the Security Council condemned in the strongest terms, were a striking illustration of dangerous escalation with unpredictable consequences.

From very beginning, Azerbaijan has supported the efforts of the League of Arab States. We look forward to their continuation with a view to ending the violence, overcoming the crisis and achieving stabilization by peaceful means and through dialogue. We pay tribute to the League's observer mission to Syria and to all its members for fulfilling their functions in the face of complex challenges. It should be noted that the Mission's presence in Syria had some positive effects and that it contributed to addressing a number of issues. We note with regret that, under the circumstances, the League was compelled to suspend its mission, and we hope it will resume its function soon.

As the Security Council pointed out in its presidential statement of 3 August 2011, the only solution to the crisis in Syria is through an inclusive and Syrian-led political process, with the aim of effectively addressing the legitimate aspirations and concerns of the Syrian people. That process should include democratic and free elections and enable the participation of all political forces of the country.

It is indisputable that unity and a coordinated approach within the Security Council are vital if it is to fulfil its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Proceeding from this understanding, Azerbaijan has been and continues to be supportive of and open to timely consultations with all members of the Security Council on initiatives concerning the situation in Syria. We look forward to constructive dialogue and discussions on the relevant draft proposals, as well as to the report of the League Arab States observer mission, and we believe in achieving the compromise that will contribute to ongoing efforts aimed at overcoming the crisis in Syria and at putting an end to human suffering there.

It is clear that the international community must not only demand certain steps from the Syrian Government, but also focus its efforts on persuading

the opposition to reciprocate. Only measures adequate to the situation, that conform with Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter and pay due regard to the role of the League of Arab States, can be considered.

Whatever the differences, it is crucial that obligations with respect to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Syria and all other States of the region be fully observed and respected. We note the position unambiguously expressed in that regard by the Security Council and the General Assembly, as well as by the League of Arab States, which in its Council resolution on Syria of 22 January 2012 supported efforts towards ending the Syrian crisis without foreign intervention.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to thank the Chairman of the Ministerial Committee on Syria of the League of Arab States, His Excellency the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, as well as the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, for their briefings to the Council, as well as for the praiseworthy efforts that they continue to undertake to bring peace to Syria.

Since mid-March 2011, Syria has experienced a serious crisis, with adverse impacts on neighbouring countries that are hosting thousands of refugees. The observer mission to Syria, deployed by the League of Arab States on 26 December 2011, sought to put an end to the repression of protesters and to bring all forms of violence, whatever their source, to a halt. Unfortunately, the violence, far from being rooted out, continues. Until recently, we spoke of protesters with bare hands; today they have become a rebellion, having begun to take up arms.

Faced with such a situation, it is hardly surprising that the mission of the League of Arab States did not achieve the expected results and that the mission itself had to be suspended. My country deplores the fact that the members of the mission were unable to conduct their work freely and without hindrance. Even worse, the violence continued while the mission was still on the ground.

Togo condemns the violence, murders, kidnappings, extrajudicial executions, rapes and violations of human rights that have been perpetrated in Syria. My country calls on the Syrian Government to put an end to the violence, lift the siege of certain neighbourhoods or cities, and order the military and its tanks to return to their barracks.

The League of Arab States has proposed a road map that includes the formation of a Government of national unity with the essential goal of preparing and convening general and presidential elections in the country in the near future. President Bashar al-Assad would transfer his mandate to the Vice-President, who would work with a Prime Minister elected by consensus and who would manage the transitional Government.

The implementation of the road map presupposes an end to the violence and engagement in honest, open and inclusive dialogue. However, this all depends on the goodwill of the Syria authorities in its implementation. Unfortunately, we have seen that the current Government is not prepared to step down, much less take part in the transition process as recommended by the road map. That is why Togo is concerned about the likelihood of the implementation of the League of Arab States' far-reaching road map, elaborated in the framework of Chapter VI of the Charter.

Could the Security Council not take action on this initiative — the outcome of the efforts of a regional organization authorized to propose ways of ending the crisis — without being accused of supporting the violence? On the other hand, could the Council, given the current situation, call upon the President of Syria to step down, without being accused of supporting one of the parties to the conflict? This body, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, must be able to engage in honest and heartfelt discussions so as to arrive at the best way to help Syria find a way out of the difficult situation facing its people, a situation that the delegation of Togo believes has gone on for far too long.

However, at this stage it is imperative that the violence stop. The Council must speak with a unified voice, leaving aside narrow interests, and launch an urgent appeal to the Syrian authorities to stop the spiral of violence. Togo believes it is now utterly clear that we must not put in the same category acts of violence perpetrated by the Government and those of protesters. Nevertheless, so as to ensure that peace and the inclusive dialogue we are hoping to see remain possible, the Syrian opposition must stand by its initial approach of achieving democracy without violence.

Togo believes that the endeavours of the Arab League should be supported and that it should be encouraged to make greater efforts to bring about a

rapprochement between the Syrian regime and the opposition, with a view to enabling direct negotiations. Such negotiations should be held under the auspices of the Arab League and with the support of the United Nations, with a view to finding a lasting solution to the crisis and thereby averting the potential civil war that looms on the horizon.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this meeting at the request of the League of Arab States. I also take this opportunity to welcome in our midst today the Chair of the League's Ministerial Council, the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani; and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Nabil Elaraby. I would like to thank them for their comprehensive briefings on the League's efforts to resolve the crisis in Syria. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Syria for his statement.

The participation in the Council's deliberations this afternoon by the Secretary of State of the United States of America, the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of France, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, the Minister of State and Foreign Relations of the Republic of Portugal, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Morocco and the Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany testifies to the importance of the discussions and also deserves our great appreciation.

Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter provides for the Council's cooperation with the regional organizations for the maintenance of international peace and security. In that context, we welcome today's meeting and think that it provides us with a good opportunity to understand the role that the League of Arab States is playing in the resolution of the problem in Syria.

The Syrian Arab Republic has historically played an important role in the Middle East by virtue of its geographic and strategic location, its diversity and the genius of its people. Developments in Syria have implications for peace and stability in the wider region. We have therefore called for a peaceful and inclusive political process to address the grievances of all sections of Syrian society since the beginning of the

protests in March 2011. The problem in Syria is not merely security-related: it is primarily political and economic and emanates from the Syrian people's desire to play a greater role in shaping their destiny. The resolution of this problem cannot be found in violence or armed struggle and its violent suppression. Nor can a solution be reached through prescriptions from outside. The Syrian people demand and deserve empowerment, so that a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political solution can be found in an atmosphere free of violence and bloodshed.

Unfortunately, during the past 10 months we have witnessed an increasing level of violence that has taken a heavy toll on civilians and the security forces and has destroyed civilian infrastructure. We unequivocally and strongly condemn all violence, irrespective of its perpetrators, no matter what justifications are proffered. We also condemn all violations of human rights and of the rights of expression and peaceful assembly. India holds those rights among the fundamental values that should be respected while ensuring the stability and security of society. India, along with its IBISA (India, Brazil and South Africa) partners, conveyed this message clearly to the Syrian leadership when an IBISA delegation visited Damascus in August 2011. That message was also contained in the presidential statement issued by the Security Council in August 2011 (S/PRST/2011/16), under India's presidency.

We see the efforts of the League of Arab States in Syria in the light of our own support for a political resolution of the crisis. We had noted that the deployment of the League's observer mission across several areas of the country had had a calming effect, and we are disappointed that the mission was suspended on 28 January owing to deteriorating security conditions and continuing violence. The report of the observer mission (see S/2012/71, enclosure 4) that the League has made available to the Security Council clearly states that there is an armed element to the opposition, which is also responsible for a number of violent acts. The continued presence and deployment of the observers could have helped reduce the violence and present a more accurate picture of developments, especially since the monitors had also confirmed that a great deal of information in the media is exaggerated and misleading. The report of the observer mission also made an important point: that the mission needs to be accompanied by a political process

to address the grievances of the Syrian people, something that we strongly support.

We are firmly of the view that all sides need to cooperate with the League of Arab States. A political process must begin without any further delay. The process should be led by the Syrians and should respect Syria's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. The League of Arab States, as an important regional organization, should play its required and historical role in promoting political dialogue among the Syrian parties. That dialogue can build upon the package of political reforms already announced by the Syrian leadership and also bring about the necessary changes to that package, so that it can find acceptance among all segments of Syrian society. The outcome of this dialogue cannot be prejudged. The outcome should also be acceptable to the widest segment of Syrian society if it is to resolve the present crisis and be enduring.

The international community, including the Security Council, should play a constructive role in the process of political dialogue among the Syrians. In this context, we welcome the submission of a draft resolution to the Security Council. We will engage with fellow Council members so that the Council can speak with a unanimous voice in support of the initiative of the League of Arab States to expeditiously resolve the Syrian crisis.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to welcome Their Excellencies the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, who have come to the Council today to make their contribution to our consideration of the situation in Syria. The terms in which they have appealed to the Council to shoulder its responsibilities deserve our full respect. I believe it is highly significant that we have with us the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Guatemala, Portugal, Morocco and Germany.

Colombia attaches the greatest importance to this meeting of the Security Council because we believe that together we can work to create conditions conducive to finding a political solution to the crises in Syria and try to put an end to the unjustified repression and violence inflicted on the country for more than 10 months.

Respect for individual freedom and the protection of the fundamental rights of all citizens are the responsibility of all Governments. The Syrian authorities

have the duty to fulfil their responsibilities under international law and to ensure the protection and respect of the human rights of the population as they set about restoring social order and stability. Colombia condemns and rejects the violent crackdown on demonstrations by civilians exercising their right to free association, free expression and peaceful assembly. We are therefore alarmed at the ongoing deterioration of the situation in Syria, the wanton violence and the death toll, with more than 5,000 lives lost in the protracted crisis.

We favour regional initiatives in quest of a peaceful solution to situations that may jeopardize the maintenance of peace and security. We therefore support the efforts of the League of Arab States to provide a political solution to the situation in Syria. As we have mentioned previously, a long-term solution requires a process led by Syrians, taking into account the legitimate aspirations of the people and the various political actors, and respecting Syria's sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity. We regret the fact, expressed in the report of the Arab League's observer mission (S/2012/71, annex, enclosure 4), that the actions of the Government have been insufficient for the effective fulfilment of the commitments the Syrian Government undertook with the League. It is also regrettable that, given the resurgence of violence and the lack of guarantees for its safety, the mission had to suspend its activities.

Concerning the draft resolution submitted by Morocco on Friday, 27 January, my delegation considers the text to be an apt response to the Arab League's concern that the Council endorse elements of the League's plan, and we lend it our full support. The gravity of the circumstances demands a pronouncement by the Council that will help create a basis and conditions for the restoration of order and the implementation of the institutional reforms necessary to end the violence and to reach an understanding leading to peace in the country.

My delegation believes — and all members of the Council agree — that the Arab plan contains elements that could lead to an accord, such as the call on the Syrian Government and all the various opposition groups to enter into a genuine political dialogue; an end to all violence, no matter on whose part, so as to protect the civilian population in Syria; the release of those detained in the course of recent events; and

access for relevant agencies of the League and Arab and international media to establish the facts.

Colombia hopes that a consensus on those worthy proposals will be possible and that the Council will adopt a decision inspired by the guiding principle of the United Nations — the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of South Africa.

South Africa expresses its appreciation to His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the State of Qatar, and His Excellency Mr. Nabil Elaraby, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, for their briefings to the Council today. We also thank the Permanent Representative of Syria for his briefing to the Council today.

South Africa is deeply concerned about the deteriorating political, security and humanitarian situation in Syria. We condemn the continued and violent loss of life in Syria and call for maximum restraint on the part of all the parties to the conflict. We emphasize that there is an urgent need for the violence to cease immediately. It is our hope that this situation will be resolved in a peaceful manner in accordance with the will of the Syrian people. We reiterate that any solution to the Syrian crisis should be Syrian-led, based on genuine national dialogue, devoid of any form of intimidation and free of interference from outside.

We urge the Syrian authorities to initiate an open, transparent and all-inclusive political process with its people to address their legitimate demands and in order to guarantee their fundamental political rights and freedoms, including their rights to freedom of assembly and speech. We also encourage the opposition to participate in this political process with a view to ensuring sustainable peace in Syria.

A comprehensive political solution must be found that will lead to political reform based on respect for democratic principles, rule of law, justice and human rights. It should also address the socio-economic development needs of the people of Syria in order to ensure long-term peace and stability.

We appreciate the League of Arab States' efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful resolution of the crisis in Syria. On 12 January, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2033 (2012), which focused

attention on enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. South Africa therefore welcomes this engagement by the Council with the League of Arab States, which, due to its proximity and knowledge of the region, is able to play a meaningful role in assisting the Syrian people to overcome their challenges. We hope that this engagement will lead to a peaceful political solution to the conflict in Syria. We strongly believe that any solution should respect the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria, and at the same time uphold the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

We thank the Secretary-General of the Arab League for providing us with the report (S.2012/71, annex, enclosure 4) of the head of the League of Arab States observer mission to Syria, General Al-Dabi. The report, which is a first-hand account of developments on the ground, provides us with an invaluable assessment of the situation. As noted in the report, Syrian citizens also believe that the crisis should be resolved peacefully, through Arab intervention alone and without international intervention, as it would allow them to live in peace and complete the reform process and bring about the change they desire. It is imperative that there be an end to violence from all sides, as it is apparent from the observer mission report that the opposition is also armed. Consequently, civilians bear the brunt of the violence perpetrated by the Government and armed opposition groups.

The critical question at this juncture is what positive contribution we can make as the international community, and the Security Council in particular, to assist the Syrian parties to resolve their conflict. Any action we take should be geared towards bringing the parties towards a peaceful resolution of their conflict rather than widening the gap between them. We therefore welcome the Arab League's and all diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving the crisis in the country, and we encourage Syrian parties to explore all opportunities to find a political solution. We must avoid any action that may run the risk of further polarizing the parties and lead to an escalation of the violence.

Military intervention to resolve political conflicts, as we have seen in other parts of the world — most recently in the Libyan situation — has unintended consequences not only for the country in question but

for the wider region. That is something the Middle East can ill afford.

We welcome the consideration of the situation in Syria through draft resolutions before the Council. We call for all the commitments and principles expressed by the delegations of the Arab League and others today to be better and more fully expressed in future drafts. South Africa shall engage constructively in those negotiations.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani to make a further statement.

Sheikh Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I apologize for asking to speak once again. I wish to note that our mission here is not to request military intervention from the Security Council or to take a decision in favour of military intervention. Moreover, we are not interfering in Syria's internal affairs. It is a matter for the Syrian people to decide who shall govern them.

I do, however, have a comment to make concerning the statement made by the representative of Syria. He referred to a poem by the late poet Nizar Qabbani. We all know that Nizar Qabbani was a bard of liberty, but we do not know what he would have to say about this situation if he were still alive. The representative of Syria talked about the colonialism under which the countries of the Gulf, especially Qatar, had suffered. Qatar was in fact never colonized but had signed a treaty with the United Kingdom that expired in the early 1970s, and had never had to resist colonialism because it and the other Gulf States lived in dire poverty until God blessed us with oil. Today, we are proud to stand by our Arab brothers who need our assistance, and we will help them without reminding them of our generosity.

I should also like to raise the question of democracy. We in no way wish to interfere; we wish to work alongside the Syrian people in implementing reforms and relaunching democracy. Democracy in Syria began in 1919, and we hope most earnestly that it will prevail once again and bless the entire Syrian people with its benefits.

With respect to Israel, we have no open front with that country, but our position is unequivocally

manifested in the support we extend to our Palestinian brothers, be they in Gaza or elsewhere. History will be the judge of that.

As for Iraq and the million who have died there, I recall that we all — including Syria, whom we thank — contributed to the liberation of Kuwait from the Iraqi occupation, and participated in all decisions taken by the Arab League and the Security Council.

As for Libya, almost 50,000 people have died there, and had Al-Qadhafi remained in power there would have been far more deaths. The League of Arab States adopted a resolution on that issue which Syria endorsed as well.

As to the statement made by the representative of the Russian Federation concerning Saudi Arabia, I note that the King of that country is a true Arab who has always demonstrated his concern for his fellow Arabs by giving priority to their interests and not his own. It was his sincerity that led him to withdraw his observers from Syria because he did not want to be a false witness to what was happening there.

The President. I give the floor to the Syrian Arab Republic to make a further statement.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is true that Syria participated in the liberation of Kuwait when the former Iraqi regime had made a bad decision. We never participated in the invasion of Iraq, however, or in the invasion of Libya. We have never been involved in a conspiracy against any Arab country.

I welcome the statement and clarifications made by the Prime Minister of Qatar. Some of his comments were accurate, but others were not. I would ask him, in the presence of Council members, whether Qatar is a member of NATO or of the League of Arab States? How is it that Qatar went to NATO's assistance in destroying Libya?

Some speakers have said that they would not move towards military intervention in Syria and that a decision of the Council would not necessarily lead to military intervention. That is all well and good, but can anyone assure us that what was done to Libya, Somalia, Iraq, the former Yugoslavia and Kosovo will not be repeated in the case of Syria?

At any rate, we are very sorry about the innocent victims. They were sons and daughters of our

homeland. I am an Ambassador of the Syrian President, and proud to be here in that capacity. I am also the Ambassador of my people, and proud of that, too. I cannot speak here in any way that would constitute an attack on my own people or hurt them. The grief of others over the deaths of innocent victims can never equal that of ours in Syria. They are all innocent victims. We know that the blood that has been spilled cannot be recovered. We know that the sadness of the victims' families can never be assuaged.

I and the people whom I represent have the responsibility to ensure that the violence comes to an end, to protect Syria for all its inhabitants, and to save lives endangered by media incitement. We must also do nothing to exacerbate the situation or promote the smuggling of weapons across our borders or the hosting of an armed opposition and conferences in neighbouring countries. My country has sent dozens of letters containing detailed information on that subject.

Only two days ago, a British newspaper that I shall not name published an article written by their correspondent in Syria, stating that Qatar and Saudi Arabia had financed shipments of weapons to Syria. All Council members are aware that, unfortunately, there are other countries with which we had a close relationship before the current crisis. They are now sheltering armed opposition groups in their territories. The opposition is engaging in military operations along our borders, bombing our oil refineries and oil and gas pipelines. Trains transporting fuel oil were bombed during what is a very cold winter. The Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya networks should stop fanning the flames and thereby truly help to end the bloodshed.

In his briefing, the Prime Minister of Qatar mentioned that he would announce the decisions reached by the organization representing all Arabs. However, that organization is not currently speaking on behalf of all Arabs. Without Syria, there is no Arab League. We will never allow anyone to adopt a decision that undermines our fate and future on our behalf or without our participation.

The targeting of humanitarian workers is clearly a criminal act, as mentioned by the representative of Portugal, but perhaps he could tell us how he deduced that it was the Government authorities who had killed the doctor who was working for the Red Cross.

There is a neighbourhood in Damascus known as Al-Hariqa, which means "the fire". Do Council

members know why it was given that name? Surely not. It was thus named because in the 1940s French forces bombed it using air and artillery strikes, killing thousands of innocent civilians living there. That is how the neighbourhood gained its name, Al-Hariqa, which means "the fire".

The Syrian parliament building was also bombed, killing everyone inside except for one person, whom Syrians have come to call al-shahid al-hai — "the living martyr". To all of that we would add that 45,000 Algerians were killed in a single hour in the capital, Algiers, in 1945, because they unfortunately believed that the end of the Second World War, the defeat of Nazism and Fascism and the victory of the values associated with freedom could bring the Algerians independence.

A wise man once said to his son, "When you know where you came from, then you will know where you will end up." As the proverb says, a book can be judged by its cover. Intentionally or otherwise, that applies to the Arab League, which is trying to harm Syria and the whole Arab nation.

One day at the end of the nineteenth century, Émile Zola, the famous French writer whose work I like very much, defended a case in which a French army officer had suffered an injustice. He wrote a letter in French — with which I am familiar but have not spoken for some time — the French title of which is "J'accuse". Today, before the Council, I am quoting Émile Zola, in the sense that I say the same thing: "J'accuse". I accuse a few people, whom I will not name so as not to embarrass them. I accuse them of working to undermine Syria's stability and sovereignty and the unity of the Syrian people by incitement and fanning the flames.

In 2003, we opened our doors to 2 million Iraqi refugees who had fled the British and American invasion of Iraq. At the time, no one helped us shoulder the resulting economic burden. Subsequently, two or three years later, fully one third of the Lebanese population came to Syria after the Israeli aggression against them in 2006. No one helped us at that time. After that, economic cooperation with Turkey — our neighbour, which we hold in high regard — led to disastrous economic consequences for small-scale artisans in the countryside around Aleppo and Damascus. We had an economic partnership agreement with Turkey that cost us billions of dollars, and as a

result, thousands of Syrian villagers lost their livelihoods.

The representative of India was right when he spoke of the economic reasons behind what is happening in Syria, but that is not our fault. Mistakes have been made, that is true. It is true that mistakes have been made; President Al-Assad has admitted as much. He drew up a road map designed to help us move beyond the crisis. He cannot do everything alone, however. He needs help from the Arab League, Turkey, brotherly nations and the Security Council.

When the Secretariat of the Arab League sent this document (S/2012/71, annex) to the Council, they said on the last page that there were other annexes, such as the Al-Dabi report, which would be sent by courier. Why will the Al-Dabi report be sent by courier later and why was it not included in the documents currently before the Council? Why was the Al-Dabi report not submitted with the extra annexes?

For our part, we have done all that is necessary. We sent a letter to the President of the Security Council outlining the main points of the Al-Dabi report. As Council members are aware, however, the Secretariat of the Arab League rejected the request made by some Council members to invite Mr. Al-Dabi to speak before the Council. I think that I have spoken quite enough.

The President: I give the floor to the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

Mr. Elaraby (spoke in Arabic): I do not intend to enter into an argument. However, the Ambassador of Syria raised an issue that I feel compelled to clarify.

When you contacted me, Mr. President, you mentioned that some members wanted General Al-Dabi to attend this meeting. I said then that the Prime Minister of Qatar and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States would attend at the request of the Ministerial Council of the League of Arab States in order to inform the Council about what had happened. General Al-Dabi was not requested to appear before the Council; his job is on the field and his report is before the Council (S/2012/71, annex, enclosure 4).

The President: There are no further names inscribed on the list of speakers. I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to members of the Council, especially my colleagues, the Permanent Representatives, their respective staffs and the Council

secretariat for all the support that they have given us during South Africa's presidency this month of January.

Indeed, it was a busy month. We could not have done it alone and without the hard work, support and positive contributions of every delegation and representatives of the Secretariat, as well as the interpreters, translators, meetings services and sound engineers.

As we end our presidency, I know that I speak on behalf of the Council in wishing the Togolese delegation good luck for the month of February.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.



Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6711th meeting

Saturday, 4 February 2012, 10 a.m.
New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Menan	(Togo)
<i>Members:</i>	Azerbaijan	Mr. Musayev
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Haroon
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 11:50 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in French*): As this is the first meeting of the Council for the month of February 2012, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Baso Sangqu, Permanent Representative of South Africa, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of January 2012. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Sangqu and his delegation for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in French*): Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2012/77, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Bahrain, Colombia, Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Portugal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by a show of hands.

In favour:

Azerbaijan, Colombia, France, Germany, Guatemala, India, Morocco, Pakistan, Portugal, South Africa, Togo, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

China, Russian Federation

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 13 votes in favour and two against. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of two permanent members of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Sir, allow me to offer Morocco's congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month. Similarly, our great appreciation goes to Ambassador Baso Sangqu and his delegation for their presidency of the Council last month.

I wish to express my delegation's great regret and disappointment over the Council's failure to adopt the draft resolution (S/2012/77) we submitted three days ago, as well as our sincere hope that the Council's failure will not serve as a pretext for further dangerous backsliding in the humanitarian situation in brotherly Syria and increased innocent civilian casualties.

It should be recalled that in their recent presentations to the Council (see S/PV.6710), Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, Chairman of the current session of the Ministerial Council of the League of Arab States, and Mr. Nabil Elaraby, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, made a clear and urgent request for the Council's support of the regional organization's bold, decisive and comprehensive initiative based on dialogue, mutual understanding and national reconciliation, aimed at achieving a peaceful solution for a situation that has only continued to worsen with time.

In assuming its responsibility as the Arab member of the Security Council and in close cooperation with other States members and non-members of the Council, in particular many of the Arab countries, Morocco, almost a year after the start of the crisis in brotherly Syria, continues to work to achieve consensus in order to enable the Council to speak with a single voice.

Morocco highly appreciates the initiative of all the Council members that joined us in sponsoring the draft resolution. I refer to the Council's unanimous response to the proposals made by one of its members. We duly appreciate the spirit of consensus and

flexibility reflected in the draft resolution, of which members are well aware.

Through our efforts, we have endeavoured to live up to the firm principles demanding an immediate and complete end to all hostilities and acts of violence, and to encourage political dialogue in order to enable the Syrian people to establish its national political institutions, preserve Syria's territorial integrity and social, pluralistic unity and, equally important, to forestall any external military intervention. Now that the Council has failed to reach a decision to support the Arab initiative, the road map remains the only tool as an exemplary framework for implementation by the League of Arab States.

We are terribly pained by the horrendous events unfolding before us. We ask God to bless all the victims without exception, and we call for the bloodshed to end and for all factions of the Syrian people to establish a democratic State and open a single, unified society enjoying understanding and harmony. We hope that the Security Council will not have to address the situation yet again, although it seems to be deteriorating. We hope that now that the Council has been unable to reach decision, all those who have leverage with the parties will spare no effort to ensure that no further innocent victims are claimed and that the violence and counter-violence will come to an end.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): It is with great sadness and concern that I note the exercise today of a double veto against a draft resolution on Syria that had been supported by all other members of the Council. This is a sad day for the Council; it is a sad day for the Syrians; and it is sad day for all the friends of democracy.

Above and beyond the thousands of dead, wounded, tortured and imprisoned since the repression began almost a year ago, history has compounded our shame because today is the anniversary of the Hama massacre and falls only one day after another massacre in Homs. The father killed on a mass scale; the son has followed in his footsteps. Horror would seem to be hereditary in Damascus.

We have been discussing Syria for 10 months, and all we have managed to adopt is a mere presidential statement on 3 August 2011 (S/PRST/2011/16) because of the exercise of the veto,

exercised in October by the same members, of a text that was as moderate as today's.

What has happened over these past 10 months? More than 6,000 Syrians have fallen victim to repression, and the situation could well be worse than we know. Ten days ago, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Pillay told us that she was no longer able to count the victims of repression. The Secretary-General has called tirelessly on the Council to act to stop the crimes against humanity being committed in Syria. And the Council has remained silent.

The Human Rights Council has thrice noted the overwhelming responsibility of the Syrian regime, and the Security Council has remained silent.

Some 133 members of the General Assembly have solemnly condemned these criminal acts and called for an immediate end to them. And the Council has remained silent.

Only three days ago in this very Chamber (see S/PV.6710), the League of Arab States called on the Council to support its action in the face of the Syrian regime's refusal to listen and the implications of that refusal for the entire region. The Secretary-General of the Arab League and the Prime Minister of Qatar called here for a solution that is the only credible road to a peaceful settlement of the Syrian crisis. A draft resolution that was submitted by Morocco, broadly co-sponsored within and outside the Council, and deemed by most to be consensual, offered the Council's support for regional efforts — nothing more, nothing less — and yet the Council will remain silent.

We cannot and must not overlook the harrowing conclusion that two permanent members of the Council have systematically obstructed all its action. They do so in the full knowledge of the tragic consequences of their decisions for the Syrian people. And in so doing, they are making themselves complicit in the policy of repression being implemented by the Damascus regime. Whatever they may claim, they have de facto taken the side of the Al-Assad regime against the Syrian people.

I know the arguments that will be made by those who today opposed the Council's action. I have already heard them say that only a few more days would have sufficed for us to reach an agreement. How can one speak of a few more days when hundreds of Syrians

are dying every day? We could wait no longer, especially as the draft resolution represents the broadest possible consensus of the international community in support of the efforts of regional actors to find a peaceful solution to the crisis.

For the past 10 months, we have been accused of seeking regime change and preparing for military intervention. That is patently false. We have fully answered those concerns. In this Chamber three days ago, our Ministers confirmed that there was no question of imposing a political regime on Syria. On that point and on the issue of armed intervention, the draft resolution was crystal clear. How much time have we squandered responding to these debating points? The procrastination, scheming and hesitancy are not commensurate with the tragedy being experienced by the Syrian people.

History will judge harshly those countries that have prevented the Council from offering its support to the courageous efforts of the Arab League to implement its plan. In so doing, they have without scruple aligned themselves with a regime slaughters its own people. In so doing, they have judged that their presence in the Middle East now depends on the future of the Al-Assad. That presence and that regime will endure the same fate.

As I said, today is sad day. But we will not stop here. We have no right to abandon the Syrian people to its tragic fate. I tell the Syrians that France will continue to work in all forums and with all partners that share its values towards the objective that should have united us here today – an end to the Syrian nightmare. We will continue to work with the Arab League, whose plan remains on the table even though it has not been endorsed by the Council. We will continue to support the peaceful Syrian opposition that is rallying around the Syrian National Council. We will continue to up the pressure by imposing further sanctions of the European Union.

I save my final word for the Syrian people, who with untold courage have kept their eyes on the prize of future freedom for the past 10 months. From this Chamber, I offer them France's full support and resolve relentlessly to pursue our action. We weathered a first double veto and returned to the Council; today, we have weathered a second on the part of the same countries. However, for the sake of the principles that guide the Council and the work of the United Nations,

and for the sake of our responsibility as a permanent members, that will not stop us.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): Germany and the overwhelming majority of Council members supported the draft resolution that was submitted by Morocco on behalf of the Arab States. However, two permanent members of the Council chose to exercise their veto. That is to say that, after more than 11 months of brutal violence and repression by the Syrian Government; after more than 5,500 deaths; after the killing of almost 400 children; and after far too many peaceful protesters have been detained, tortured, raped and abused, today the Security Council again failed to assume its responsibilities and to live up to its mandate to maintain international peace and security.

In short, the people of Syria and the region have been let down again, and that is a crying shame even more so in the light of the recent massacres in Homs, even more so in the light of one the bloodiest days of the Arab Spring; and even more so on the tragic thirtieth anniversary of the Hama massacre. And that is the real scandal.

Germany's position is very clear. The Council should urge Al-Assad to stop the killing. His regime has to put an immediate end to the violence. It has to stop the massive, gross and systematic violation of human rights. That was the first major element of the draft resolution before us (S/2012/77).

Many of the demands expressed in the draft resolution were actually accepted by the Syrian Government on 19 December 2011. The Syrian Government agreed to the cessation of violence, to the release of all political prisoners, to the withdrawal of its armed forces, and to the unhindered freedom of movement of observers and journalists. According to the League of Arab States, however, none of those commitments was fully met by the Syrian Government.

Last Tuesday, this Council heard a remarkable plea by the League of Arab States (see S/PV.6710). The Arab States urged the Council not to let the Syrian people down; they urged the members of the Council to support them in resolving the crisis in Syria. That was the second major element of our draft resolution – to answer the call from Arab States and large parts of the international community to fully support the initiative of the League of Arab States, which is aimed at finding a political, Syrian-led solution to the crisis. That was the call of the draft resolution.

The draft resolution did not foresee an arms embargo or a sanctions regime, as we had wished for, nor did it mandate a commission of inquiry into human rights violations, as we had advocated. We regret that it did not, but we negotiated in a spirit of compromise, and we were ready to make substantial concessions. The draft also did not call for regime change, as some maintained. What it did, however, was to support a political framework set out by the League of Arab States. That framework is intended to facilitate a Syrian-led political transition to a democratic and plural political system, because that is what it is all about — to have the Syrian people itself decide on its own political future. That is the way for peace and security to best be achieved, in Syria and beyond. And that is what the majority here in the Council agrees upon. We regret that two Council members disagreed.

The violence in Syria has to stop. A political dialogue has to begin under the auspices of the League of Arab States. There is a political way out of this crisis. We are afraid, however, that today's decision will spur further violence and make it harder to reach a political solution. Nevertheless, Germany will continue to work with all partners in the region to support the League of Arab States.

As much as we regret today's decision, let me reassure members of the Council that Germany remains ready to work with all of them to overcome our division and to bridge the gaps. We owe that not only to the Syrian people, but also to the mandate of this Council, which is the maintenance of peace and security.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): The United States is disgusted that a couple of members of this Council continue to prevent us from fulfilling our sole purpose here, which is to address an ever-deepening crisis in Syria and a growing threat to regional peace and security. For months, this Council has been held hostage by a couple of members. Those members stand behind empty arguments and individual interests, while delaying and seeking to strip bare any text that would pressure Al-Assad to change his actions. That intransigence is even more shameful when we consider that at least one of those members continues to deliver weapons to Al-Assad.

The United States has long said that it is past time for the Council to assume its responsibilities and to impose tough, targeted sanctions and an arms embargo

on the Al-Assad regime, as many individual countries have already done. But today's draft resolution (S/2012/77) did not even do that. The text simply supported an Arab League plan that Al-Assad himself already agreed to uphold and the subsequent Arab League decision towards a peaceful resolution of the crisis. The sponsors of the draft resolution truly went the last mile to try to reach consensus on a draft that already more than accommodates the concerns of a few Council members about the use of force and sanctions. Subsequent attempts today to introduce wrecking amendment's at the eleventh hour, only to further delay Council action, are unforgivable.

Since yesterday, the Syrian Government has waged and intensified an especially horrific campaign in Homs to murder hundreds, including women and children, with artillery, tanks and other indiscriminate violence. Syrian forces continue to prevent hundreds of innocent and injured civilians from seeking medical help. The international community must protect the Syrian people from that abhorrent brutality. But a couple of members of this Council remain steadfast in their willingness to sell out the Syrian people and to shield a craven tyrant.

The United States, by contrast, stands fully and irrevocably with the long-suffering people of Syria.

Since those same two Council members vetoed the last draft resolution on Syria, we have heard reports from the High Commissioner for Human Rights that the regime may be committing crimes against humanity. We also heard from Arab League Secretary-General Elaraby and from Qatari Prime Minister Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, who noted that the Assad regime has "failed to make any serious effort to cooperate" (see *SPV.6710*, p. 4) with the Arab League and that Assad's "killing machine continues effectively unabated" (*ibid.*, p. 5).

Since those two members last vetoed a draft resolution on Syria, an estimated 3,000 more civilians have been killed, with another almost 250 killed just yesterday. Many thousands more have been held captive and tortured by Al-Assad and his Shabia gangs. Since those two members last vetoed a resolution, however, and despite the absence of Security Council action, we have seen more and more Syrians speak out in peaceful demonstrations against the regime.

Once again, the courageous people of Syria can clearly see who on this Council supports their yearning

for liberty and universal rights and who does not. And during this season of change, the people of the Middle East can now see clearly which nations have chosen to ignore their calls for democracy and instead to prop up desperate dictators. Those who oppose the draft resolution have denied this last chance to end Al-Assad's brutality through peaceful means under Arab League auspices. Any further bloodshed will be on their hands.

The Governments that once again stymied Council action today need to reverse course and to heed the voices of the Syrian people — for their own sake, for the sake of Syria, for the sake of the Middle East, and for the sake of this Council.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): This is indeed a sad day for the Security Council. Once again, it was unable to act to send a forceful and united message to the Syrian authorities to stop killing and torturing their people, even though in the recent hours hundreds more have been killed.

How long will this Council allow the Syrian killing machine to continue to push the country into a bloody sectarian conflict? How many more dead and maimed will it take to finally force this Council into action? It is indeed regrettable and particularly worrying that the Security Council was unable to unanimously support the decision of the League of Arab States of 22 January to facilitate a political transition to a democratic, pluralistic political system in which all Syrians are equal, regardless of their affiliations or ethnicity or beliefs, and are de facto citizens of their country.

A Syrian-led political transition based on a serious political dialogue between the Syrian Government and the whole spectrum of the Syrian opposition: that is exactly what those who did not support this resolution today had been demanding.

The Security Council was unable to respond to the plea of the League of Arab States that it support the Arab world's attempt to end the killing and reach a peaceful political solution to the Syrian crisis — two goals that are, I believe, shared by all on this Council. Yet again the Council has failed to meet its responsibilities towards the Syrian people and to fulfil its role as the primary body entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. Not only is this extremely disappointing, it is simply unacceptable.

As was made perfectly clear in this Council last Tuesday, the situation in Syria is untenable and is rapidly spiraling towards civil war. Clear and unanimous support by this Council for the efforts of the Arab League is essential if we are to counter such a dangerous development. It was made abundantly clear in this Chamber that this draft resolution was not about regime change, nor did it seek to impose changes on Syria from outside, much less to allow for the use of force or impose sanctions. The sole objective of this resolution was to put an immediate end to the violence and enable a Syrian-owned political dialogue that would allow the Syrian people to determine their own future peacefully.

As my minister stated here earlier this week (see S/PV.6710), we fully support the efforts of the League of Arab States regarding Syria, including its decision of 22 January 2012 and the political road map therein. They represent the only viable way to solve this crisis peacefully, through political means.

Portugal remains fully committed to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Syria. We urge all parties in Syria to immediately halt all violence and engage in a serious political dialogue under the auspices of the League of Arab States. Portugal will continue to work actively with the Arab League towards the fulfilment of these objectives.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom is appalled by the decision of Russia and China to veto an otherwise consensus resolution, submitted by Morocco, the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Germany, Portugal, Colombia, Togo, Libya, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Tunisia, Oman and Turkey.

It has been 10 months since the Syrian people bravely demanded their universal rights, and 10 months since the Syrian regime responded by violently repressing and killing its own people.

Six months ago the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2011/16) condemning the widespread violations of human rights and the use of force against civilians by the Syrian authorities. It called for an immediate end to violence and compliance with obligations under international law, and for the Syrian Government to implement its stated commitments to reform. On that day, the death toll in

Syria stood at approximately one thousand. But the Syrian regime only continued its brutal repression.

Four months ago, two Council members vetoed an attempt to send a clear message to the Syrian regime to end the bloodshed. That day, the death toll stood at three thousand, and the Syrian regime only continued its brutal repression.

The death toll today stands at around six thousand. The Syrian regime has ferociously escalated its already brutal repression in the last 24 hours, subjecting the citizens of Homs to artillery and heavy weaponry. The death toll will be high. Those who blocked Council action today must ask themselves how many more deaths they are prepared to tolerate before they support even modest and measured action.

Last Tuesday, this Council and the world heard from His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani of Qatar and from the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States (see S/PV.6710). They came with a simple request for Security Council support for the Arab League's plan to facilitate a political transition and bring about a peaceful resolution to the crisis. The original Moroccan draft resolution did just that. From the outset it had support from the vast majority of Council members and had the backing of the Arab League.

Yet some Council members argued that the draft resolution imposed regime change. It said no such thing. But in an attempt to reach consensus, we provided further assurances in the text. The same minority argued that the text could somehow be used to authorize military intervention. It did no such thing. It was a Chapter VI resolution. But in an attempt to reach consensus, we provided further assurances in the text. The same minority argued that very modest language expressing concern about weapons was somehow tantamount to an arms embargo. It was not. But we took it out. They said that mere mention of Arab League sanctions was tantamount to United Nations sanctions. It was not. But we took it out in an effort to reach consensus.

The facts speak for themselves. There is nothing in this text that should have triggered a veto. We removed every possible excuse. The reality is that Russia and China have today made a choice to turn their backs on the Arab world and the support tyranny rather than the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people. They have failed in their responsibility as

permanent members of the Security Council, and they have done so on the most shameful of days of the Syrian killing machine's three hundred days of oppression.

The United Kingdom will continue to support the Arab League's efforts to bring about a peaceful transition in Syria. We shall continue to support the brave Syrian people in their demands for change. The regime must cease the violence. There must now be a transition to a new political dispensation. Should the regime continue on its current bloody trajectory, we will once again bring the issue back to this Council, in consultation with our colleagues in the Arab League.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of Colombia, I wish to state my disappointment and regret at the outcome of the vote, which denies the member countries of the League of Arab States, and this Organization itself, the support that has been requested of us for a plan intended to bring an end to the tragedy being experienced in Syria and to defend the lives and rights of the people of that country.

Since the beginning of the violent repression by the Syrian Government of the civilian population more than ten months ago, we have made many attempts, many appeals to find a solution to the crisis. The response has been a continuous escalation of the brutal use of force and the violation of all the human rights of the people of that country.

Throughout this process we have engaged in ongoing dialogue with the Arab countries. We always took into account their guidance and requests to permit and facilitate Arab League action before the Council took a decision. This was done until their efforts were no longer responded to, and they specifically requested, last week, that this Council support their political transition plan in order to achieve peace and establish a democratic regime in Syria.

Colombia supported and voted in favour of the draft resolution submitted by Morocco in response to the request formally presented to the Council by the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States (see S/PV.6710), convinced that the Syrian people must be rescued from the terrible tragedy that they are suffering today.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our position on the situation in Syria was fully

explained by our Minister for Foreign Affairs last Tuesday in the Chamber (see S/PV.6710).

Our prime objective is to help to put an end to the spiral of violence afflicting the Syrian population and to find a political solution to the crisis experienced by that country. We believe that the League of Arab States has adopted an initiative that meets both goals (see S/2012/71, annex). We therefore voted in favour of the draft resolution just put before us (S/2012/77).

We regret that our vote was in vain owing to the very particular voting system that governs our decision-making process. That adds to the ranks of those affected by this matter — not only the victims of the violence, whom, I underscore, are our prime concern, but also the effectiveness of the Security Council in adequately responding to the challenges facing it.

In conclusion, our delegation deeply regrets that we have failed to meet the request made of us by the League of Arab States. We urge its member countries to persevere in its initiatives, including that of 22 January.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): I want to start by congratulating you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. My delegation and I look forward to working with you to make your presidency truly successful. In an earlier incarnation, I had the opportunity to have visited your beautiful country. I would also like to take this opportunity to complement South Africa, Ambassador Baso Sangqu and his team for their wise and able stewardship of the Council in January.

The Syrian Arab Republic has historically played an important role in the Middle East. Prolonged instability and unrest in Syria have implications for peace and stability in the wider region. India is concerned about the present situation in Syria, which has resulted in the deaths of thousands of civilians and security forces personnel over the past 10 months. Therefore, since the beginning of the protest, we have called for a peaceful and inclusive political process to address the grievances of all sections of Syrian society.

We strongly condemn all violence, irrespective of the perpetrators. We also condemn all violations of human rights. India holds the rights of expression and peaceful assembly among the fundamental values that should be respected, while ensuring the stability and

security of society. India has conveyed that message to the Syrian leadership, both bilaterally and with our partners Brazil and South Africa. We have impressed upon the Syrian side to abjure violence and pay heed to the aspirations of the people of Syria. That message was also contained in the presidential statement issued by the Council in August 2011 under India's presidency (S/PRST/2011/16).

We are firmly of the view that a political process for the resolution of the present crisis should be led by the Syrians themselves. We believe that the main role of the international community, including the Council, is to facilitate engagement of the Syrian people with all sections of Syrian society for an inclusive political process that takes into account the legitimate aspirations of all Syrians, while ensuring respect for the country's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

We note that the draft resolution enjoins the Government to protect its population, indicating that it should have the capacity to do so. The League of Arab States is an important regional organization and should play its required and historic role in promoting political dialogue among the Syrian parties.

In that context, we welcome the deployment of the League's observer mission across several areas of the country, which had a calming effect on the level of violence and provided a more accurate picture of developments. We hope that the mission can return soon.

Our support for today's draft resolution is in accordance with our support for the efforts of the Arab League for a peaceful resolution of the crisis through a Syrian-led inclusive political process. We note that the draft resolution expressly rules out any measures under Article 42 of the Charter and calls for a serious political dialogue between the Syrian Government and the whole spectrum of the opposition under the auspices of the League of Arab States.

We believe that the leadership of Syria is a matter for the Syrian people to decide. It would be necessary for all opposition forces in Syria to peacefully engage in constructive dialogue with the authorities. We hope that that would create a new environment for peace and facilitate a political process. That political dialogue should build upon the political reforms already announced by the Syrian leadership, with the necessary changes for them to find acceptance among all sections of Syrian society.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The bloodshed and violence in Syria must be immediately ended. To that end, the Russian Federation has undertaken active diplomatic efforts in contacts with the Syrians, Syria's Arab neighbours and other members of the international community. Today, it was announced in Moscow that, on instructions from President Medvedev of the Russian Federation, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Lavrov and the Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation, Mr. Fradkov, are to visit Damascus on 7 February for a meeting with President Al-Assad of the Syrian Arab Republic.

In the Security Council, we have actively tried to reach a decision for an objective solution that would truly help to put a prompt end to violence and start a political process in Syria. The decision of the Security Council should be just that, but from the very beginning of the Syrian crisis some influential members of the international community, including some sitting at this table, have undermined any possibility of a political settlement, calling for regime change, encouraging the opposition towards power, indulging in provocation and nurturing the armed struggle.

The work of the Security Council was not taken to its conclusion. The draft resolution put to the vote (S/2012/77) did not adequately reflect the true state of affairs in Syria and sent a biased signal to the Syrian sides. The sponsors of the draft resolution did not take into account our proposed amendments to the draft resolution to the effect that the Syrian opposition must distance itself from extremist groups that are committing acts of violence, and calling on States and all those with any relevant opportunity to use their influence to stop those groups committing acts of violence. Nor has account been taken of our proposals that along with the withdrawal of the Syrian armed forces from the cities, there should be an end to attacks by armed groups on State institutions and neighbourhoods. Nor has there been support for the proposal to show more flexibility for the intermediary efforts of the League of Arab States, which would increase the chances for the success of an inclusive Syrian political process.

Under these conditions, the Russian delegation voted against the draft resolution submitted. We greatly regret such an outcome of our joint work in the Security Council. We believe that intensive efforts by

the international community will be continued, with a view to an immediate end to the violence and a successful beginning and conclusion of an inclusive Syrian political process and to withdrawal of that country from a profound crisis.

Russia, for its part, will continue to work precisely in that direction.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Security Council has just voted on the draft resolution on Syria (S/2012/77), and China voted against it.

China has, all along, followed closely the developments in Syria. We call on all parties in Syria to stop the violence and in particular to avoid casualties among innocent civilians, to restore order in the country as soon as possible and to respect the request of the Syrian people for reform and for the safeguarding of their own interests. This is in the fundamental interest of Syria and its people. We support the good-offices efforts of the Arab League to resolve the Syrian crisis so as to promote an early launch of an inclusive political process led by the Syrian people and in which all parties extensively participate, to peacefully resolve differences and disputes through dialogue and negotiations, and to restore stability in Syria.

The international community should provide constructive assistance to help achieve these goals. At the same time, the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria should be fully respected. The actions of the Security Council on the Syrian issue should comply with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and help ease the tensions, help promote political dialogue and diffuse disputes, and help maintain peace and stability in the Middle East region, rather than complicate the issue.

Under these principles, China participated actively in the consultations on the draft resolution and supported the efforts of the Arab League to facilitate a political settlement of the Syrian issue and to maintain stability in the region. Like many Council members, China maintains that under the current circumstances, to put undue emphasis on pressuring the Syrian Government for a prejudged result of the dialogue or to impose any solution will not help resolve the Syrian issue. Instead, that may further complicate the situation.

China supports the amendments proposed by the Russian Federation and has noted that the Russian Foreign Minister will visit Syria next week. The request by some Council members for continued consultations on the draft resolution is reasonable. It is regrettable that these reasonable concerns were not taken into account. To put through a vote when parties are still seriously divided over the issue does not help maintain the unity and authority of the Security Council nor help to properly resolve the issue. In this context, China voted against the draft resolution.

Syria is an important country in the Middle East. Peace and stability in Syria serve the common interests of the Syrian people and the international community. China will continue to work with the international community and to play a positive and constructive role in the proper settlement of the Syrian issue.

Mr. Haroon (Pakistan): Many congratulations, Mr. President, on assuming the post of Council President, and with such an important world issue at the very start of your tenure.

The problem in Syria has assumed dimensions that are not only regrettable but condemnable. We have to understand that while we have made civilization, we have also condoned expressions like "collateral damage", and so many others, which it is not my intention to name here today. But I believe that we accept too much too easily. It reminds me of when, two thousand years ago, Pontius Pilate washed his hands and said, "I have nothing to do with this." Two thousand years later, we still see that humanity suffers from that particular viewpoint.

Pakistan had some serious concerns, mainly against killings, the massacre of innocents. But also, on a point of principle of the Charter, we were not happy about any infringement on the sovereignty or integrity of Syria.

There was a very spirited attempt, as related by Sir Mark just now as well, to take care of issues and concerns, and we are thankful for that. I believe that it became important to be able to end killings by asking both sides — in fact, forcing both sides — to acknowledge that it is unacceptable, and based on the strong moral point that the Arab League draft introduced into this.

There was a question of amnesty. I also believe it was an accepted fact that everyone has to get involved

to stop it. Do not forget that nothing succeeds anywhere in the world against a government without external help. That is a point of history that cannot be ignored.

It is easy for those of us who today voted in the majority to sit back and say, "Well, we have done our bit." No, we have not. We cannot wash our hands of this. We must continue and seek — as the Russians and the Chinese have stated that they will continue to seek — the way forward. I believe that the best vehicle is the Arab League plan and the very substantial moves that have been accepted over the last few days.

I believe that the offer of no regime change, of plurality, and the promotion of democracy are important aspects of this situation. We have stood by that. I believe that even today our system has indeed let us down. We have been very clear, without taking political benefit out of it, that this aspect of the veto is always a heart-wrencher. It cuts both ways, benefitting one side at one moment and the other at another moment. Either everyone should have the veto, and then see how the world gets on, or perhaps we should all consider not using it whatsoever.

I also think we have arrived at a situation that demands we persevere in our efforts to strengthen the relationships among us. Today our decision mattered a great deal to our Arab brethren, who have been so important to us. We had to stand with them on principle because they wanted our support pretty unanimously. I raised a question a couple of days earlier, noting that I did not then see present either Tunisia, Egypt or others that are such strong proponents on this issue; and I am glad to see their presence today. That is a great plus, in my mind.

I would like to close with a few words of reminder that all this was done with good intentions on all sides. I am not going to beat anyone with a stick. I believe consensus was achieved, though there were some drop-outs from it, and I believe we can still work towards that consensus. There is a visit to Syria scheduled in the next few days. I am sure that some more points may arise.

This matter should not be allowed to die. The draft resolution should remain an active matter before this Council, and we should address it again as soon as possible, with the help even of those that decided today not to vote for it. By keeping the matter active, we would give hope to those who are expecting action

from us. Having made these few remarks, I urge the Council to keep its engagement on this matter alive.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): Let me start by congratulating you, Sir, and Togo on your assumption of the Council presidency for the month of February. Please be assured of South Africa's full support.

The world is watching with great concern as the crisis in Syria unfolds and degenerates by the day, claiming civilian lives and injuring and displacing many people, including children. As we have said before, we remain deeply concerned about the deteriorating political, security, socio-economic and humanitarian situation in Syria. It continues to deteriorate despite calls from the international community on the Syrian Government and the armed opposition to stop the violence and settle their differences in a peaceful manner. We condemn the violent loss of life in Syria and call for maximum of restraint from all parties to the conflict. We urge the parties to stop the violence immediately and commit themselves to finding a peaceful, political solution through a Syrian-led and owned, transparent and all-inclusive political process that will fulfil the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.

The political process will guarantee, among other things, the people's fundamental political rights and freedoms and restore their dignity through the delivery of democracy, political reform, justice, human rights and socio-economic development. We believe that such a solution will indeed ensure long-term peace and stability. We regret the slow progress in the implementation of the reforms already announced, and encourage the Syrian Government to implement these reforms expeditiously. We urge the opposition to commit to fully participating in the implementation of these reforms.

South Africa believes that the efforts of the League of Arab States, as the organization with knowledge of and proximity to the situation in Syria, should be supported and given the necessary political space to find a solution to the Syrian crisis. South Africa supports the efforts of the League of Arab States to facilitate the Syrian-led political process, as stated in the draft resolution. It is important that the Syrian people be allowed to decide their own fate, including their future leadership.

Fundamentally, no foreign or external parties should interfere in Syria as its people engage in the

critical decision-making process on the future of their country. Any solution must preserve the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria. We are also satisfied that the final draft resolution (S/2012/77) was not aimed at imposing regime change on Syria, which would be against the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

We sincerely hope that the Syrian Government and the opposition will continue to cooperate with the League of Arab States in its efforts to assist them to reach a peaceful political solution. We further call on the international community to render support to this process and refrain from actions and statements that may polarize the parties and delay, or even paralyse, the League of Arab States process.

The current political environment in the Middle East, a region whose geopolitics cannot afford to have a weak or conflict-ridden Syria, warrants us to act responsibly in the interest of regional and international peace and security. South Africa voted in favour of the draft resolution today because we believe that it has the potential to help facilitate a Syrian-led political process and dialogue between the Syrian parties, and to bring long-term peace and stability to the country, in accordance with the aspirations of the Syrian people.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): Azerbaijan is deeply concerned at the continuing crisis and widespread violence in Syria that have resulted in the death of many people. Despite the repeated calls of the international community, the situation in Syria continues to deteriorate, causing scores and deaths and injuries. Azerbaijan has from the very beginning supported the efforts of the League of Arab States, and is looking forward to their continuation with a view to ending the violence, overcoming the crisis and finding a solution by peaceful means and through dialogue.

The only solution to the crisis in Syria is through an inclusive and Syrian-led political process with the aim of effectively addressing the legitimate aspirations and concerns of Syria's people, without external interference. This understanding is clearly expressed in the draft resolution (S/2012/77). It is crucial that obligations with respect to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Syria and all other States of the region be fully observed and respected. It is important that the draft resolution emphasizes that the current political crisis in Syria must be resolved peacefully, and notes that nothing

authorizes measures under Article 42 of the United Nations Charter.

Azerbaijan supported the draft resolution on the aforementioned understanding and with the hope that its adoption would contribute to ongoing efforts aimed at encouraging dialogue, overcoming the crisis and putting an end to human suffering.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Togo.

Togo had hoped that the situation that has prevailed in Syria for almost a year would allow the Security Council to send a strong message to the leaders and opposition in that country to end the violence and embark on a process of political negotiation that is inclusive and transparent. It was for that reason that Togo voted in favour of the draft resolution submitted by Morocco, and was a sponsor of the text. Unfortunately, the Council was not able to send this message to the Syrian political class, and my country deplores this state of affairs. Our Council, which has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, has failed once again to bring peace and security to Syria by speaking with a single voice.

Despite that failure, the Council should be able to continue to seek ways and means to bring peace to Syria. The Syrian people should not continue to suffer, cry and bury their dead as our Council remains impassive. The Security Council must act. Togo continues to believe that it is not too late for it to resolutely commit itself on the path of the necessary action that must be taken.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I congratulate your friendly country, Togo, and you yourself, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We wish you all success in that sensitive stewardship. I would also like to congratulate my colleague Ambassador Sangqu of South Africa on presiding over the Council for the past month.

I think that drawing inspiration from history in this Chamber is an extremely important exercise. Invoking examples from the cultures and literatures of peoples and nations is a critical experience. As I say this, I recall the literary masterpiece by the German author Johann Wolfgang von Goethe entitled *Faust*. It is a work that speaks in symbolic terms of the risks inherent in a person's — even a very wise one — selling his soul to Satan. That symbolic story summarizes the idea with which I would like to begin my statement, which is that a human being should not sell his or her soul to Satan in exchange for illusory gains that could destroy that person's hopes for freedom further down the road.

My delegation has examined the text of the draft resolution put before the Council. Given our firm belief in the pan-Arab principle, we had hoped that the examination of the question of Syria would have remained, first, exclusively within the Syrian household, and then in the larger supporting Arab household structure.

However, the rush by some parties to invite international intervention — and we know in advance what their objectives are in dealing with Arab issues, which are first and foremost the question of Palestine and the Israeli occupation of Arab territories — is a cause for concern. It is indeed a cause for sadness, deep sadness for the regrettable state of affairs in which we now find ourselves.

At this point, I would like to quote in English a sentence spoken some 22 years ago by former United States Attorney General Ramsey Clark:

(*spoke in English*)

"The United Nations, which was created to prevent the scourge of war, has become an instrument of war."

(*spoke in Arabic*)

My delegation has followed with great appreciation the efforts by the advocates in the Council for human rights and the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, especially the inadmissibility of intervention in the internal affairs of countries, of waging wars against countries to gain exclusive control of their geographic location and their lucrative natural resources, and of resolving the economic problems of the Western Powers at the expense of the peoples of developing nations. To those States that safeguard international peace and security, we express our deep

gratitude and appreciation, and the annals of history will record the noble positions they take.

Is it not strange that over a period of 45 years from its creation in 1945 to 1988 — the Security Council adopted only 690 resolutions, whereas in the following 20 years it adopted three times that number? That indicates that the current world is less secure, less just and less fair and that the provisions of the United Nations Charter are seriously threatened.

In this context, I would like to stress that the Syrian Arab Republic, a founding member of this world Organization, has been targeted by some Powers for punishment because of its commitment to international legal norms, especially on the issue of defending the human rights of peoples. Today, Syria is being sacrificed in a crisis manufactured by parties that do not want the best for Syria and its people. That is evident from their support — in funding, arms and favourable media coverage — for armed terrorist groups that kill, abduct and intimidate Syrian citizens and destroy and sabotage infrastructure, including power generation equipment, oil and gas pipelines, Ministry of Justice buildings and railroads.

Is there a sensible person who would believe that any government would commit massacres in any city on a day when the Security Council is scheduled to hold a meeting to examine the situation in that country? Would any entity put itself in such a position?

The most convincing proof of the criminal nature of those armed groups lies in the acts committed this very morning, which killed innocent people and destroyed homes as well as the buildings housing Syrian embassies in many capitals, all of that without any condemnation by the Secretary-General or the Council. The goal is to send a misleading message aimed at influencing the Council by swaying its decision-makers with respect to the draft resolution.

The best proof of our good intentions in our dealings with the League of Arab States is reflected in the contents of the report of the observers of the League of Arab States (see S/2012/71, annex, enclosure 4). What is very strange is that Council members did not examine that report in due time, for reasons known to all of them. The report confirms that Syria has fulfilled its obligations under the protocol.

Here, and for the fourth time at least, let me stress that if the killing had ceased, if those who pay

lip service to democracy had ceased to implement their designs against Syria, if those States that provide generous funds — billions of dollars — and the most modern weapons and means of communication to the armed groups, hosting them in their capitals in order to facilitate their criminal acts against the Syrian people and their property, if they had ceased to do so, Syria would have fulfilled the League of Arab States plan of action and the relevant protocol under that plan.

Certain Arab Gulf States have dragged the League of Arab States to the Security Council, with a view to leveraging the Council's power against Syria and to internationalizing a purely Arab issue, contrary to the provisions of the Charter of the League of Arab States. That is in spite of the fact that since the beginning of the crisis, all of the Arab politicians in the League of Arab States have been competing among themselves to stress that they are not seeking the internationalization of the crisis in Syria.

The report of the observer mission that I mentioned earlier stresses that Syria has fulfilled its obligations despite the acts of violence. Let me quote here from the report:

"The mission noted that the Government strived to help it succeed in its task and remove any barriers that might stand in its way. The Government also facilitated meetings with all parties. No restrictions were placed on the movement of the mission and its ability to interview Syrian citizens, both those who opposed the Government and those loyal to it." (S/2012/71, annex, enclosure 4, para. 73)

About two and a half months ago, the Qatari Al-Jazeera satellite channel broadcast from Doha a political programme hosted by a well-known journalist. The two guests on that programme were the current President of Tunisia — who was not the President at that time — and a Syrian political activist. During that programme, its host said, addressing the current Tunisian President, "Do not ask me about my sources, but I have received information from the highest levels in Doha to the effect that the Syrian regime will change on 22 January" — that is, the very day on which the League of Arab States met in Cairo and took the decision to come before the Security Council.

It is indeed strange that the calls for reform, respect for human rights and the right to peaceful demonstration apply to Syria only, not to any other

State in the region, especially those that sponsored the draft resolution submitted against Syria. Some of the Arab States that sponsored the draft are the very same ones that prevented the Arab League from endorsing the integrated initiative submitted by Syria to the League of Arab States on bolstering the process of democracy, reform and human rights in all Arab States. That initiative included a demand for the issuing of a decision by the Council of the Arab League that would put forward a comprehensive Arab vision aimed at promoting democracy and reform in all Arab countries and fulfilling the aspirations of the masses in the areas of freedom; human rights; a multiparty system; freedom of information; fair and transparent elections; freedom of expression; the right of assembly and peaceful demonstration; and respect for the rights of minorities, alien residents and expatriate workers on their territory.

Is it rational that among the sponsors of the draft are States that prevent women from attending a soccer match? And those States are calling on Syria to be democratic?

Peaceful demonstration is a basic right guaranteed under Syrian law. The right to demand reform is the right of every Syrian citizen, and no one can deny that. But what no law can prevent and no State can accept is terrorism, chaos and the sabotaging of public and private property — the destabilization of a country. Every peaceful demonstrator, every person who calls for genuine reform aimed at safeguarding the Syrian homeland from major schemes and all those who seek dialogue as a way to resolve the crisis are not only welcome partners but key components of any effort to end the crisis in Syria as well as an integral part of reform and development in Syria.

The draft resolution which the Council failed to adopt today emphasizes the importance of the dialogue that has been mentioned here. We are in favour of such a dialogue and wish to see it continue and succeed. But those who wish to be parties to such a dialogue have refused to engage in dialogue openly, and the Security Council and the League of Arab States are fully aware of that. Also aware of that fact are those countries that have sought, and continue to seek, to host such a dialogue. This comes at a time when my country has agreed, in the Council, to undertake immediately a national, comprehensive dialogue that is inclusive of all parties, but under the auspices of the homeland. However, the other side, which has stonewalled the

undertaking of such a dialogue as a result of encouragement by some who wish to adopt dominating positions, has rejected dialogue and continues, even as we speak, to reject it.

It is our hope that the parties still supporting the opposition and armed groups — and those parties spoke about themselves, as some of my colleagues indicated in their statements — will sincerely advise their friends to foster a national dialogue, abandon all intentions to destroy Syria and to abandon all attempts to authorize outside military intervention. Indeed, they must join the ranks that will build Syria as it endeavours to renew itself.

Syria will enjoy security and stability as it always has. Syria will continue to be the homeland of tolerance and openness. Syria will remain the homeland of all Syrians, irrespective of their affiliations and political positions. There will be no majority and no minority. All of that will be developed on the ground in an initiative involving national ownership by the Syrian themselves and without external intervention. Syrians do not need to wait for lessons on democracy and human rights from Powers that deal with those lofty humanitarian concepts as if they were commodities to be traded speculatively on a stock exchange.

My colleague, the representative of the United States of America, said that she was disgusted at the use of the right of veto by two permanent members of the Security Council. I am not evaluating what she said. I respect her point of view. Nonetheless, I would like to ask her if her disgust also applies to the 60 vetoes that have been cast in this Chamber to prevent the establishment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region, the fair resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the settlement of the question of Palestine.

The statements made by some colleagues betray the true and genuinely hostile intentions of their countries towards the country, people and Government of Syria. All along, the tone of their statements has been undiplomatic, and their description of the Syrian Government as a regime is inconsistent with the principles of international law. They used inappropriate language to refer to the President of the State of Syria. It is only natural for us to say that the use of those words in this Chamber by some colleagues betrays their direct involvement in attempts to fan the flames

of violence, escalation and bloodshed in Syria and among Syrians. We do not accept any of that.

I do not wish to speak at length, but I would like to conclude my remarks by raising an important matter. Today, a journalist working for Al-Jazeera's English channel in London said on record that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar had instructed the channel to increase and intensify its coverage just hours before the convening of this meeting. I leave it to Council members to draw their own conclusions from the

political instructions given to that self-proclaimed news channel to falsely step up the pressure on the Security Council by claiming that massacres are being carried out in Syria.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.